

2021

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# Societal Debates (Vol III)



L-Università  
ta' Malta

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ISBN 978-9918-0-0080-7

National Safety and Security Monitor, University of Malta

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This report is part of a project conducted by the University of Malta and funded by the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security.

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## **0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **0.1 TOLERANCE**

1. Attitudes towards Western Europeans and Eastern Europeans did not change significantly between 2011 and 2021
2. Attitudes towards Africans improved significantly between 2011 and 2021 and went from relatively cold to relatively warm
3. Attitudes towards Arabs improved significantly between 2011 and 2021 but remain slightly in negative territory
4. Western Europeans remain the most liked by the Maltese whilst Arabs the least liked socio-ethnic group
5. Overall, levels of Tolerance increased significantly during the past decade
6. The increase in Tolerance was not matched by increases in perceptions of Security, which did not change significantly during the same time period

### **0.2 WELLBEING**

1. Life Satisfaction, Social Competence and Psychological Health increased significantly between 2011 and 2021
2. Self Esteem did not demonstrate significant changes during the past decade
3. Wellbeing is positively correlated with extent of Social Network
4. Wellbeing is positively correlated with Health
5. Life Satisfaction is positively correlated with Positive Relative Deprivation & Police Trust; those who do not have air-conditioning and those who do not have a Smart TV report less Life Satisfaction than those who do; Married enjoy more Life Satisfaction than Widowed/Annulled/Divorced; Western region report higher Life Satisfaction than South Eastern and Southern Harbour regions; Northern region higher than Southern Harbour in Life Satisfaction
6. Social Competence is positively correlated with Security; those who do not have a Computer and those who do not have a Smart TV report less Social Competence than others; females report more Social Competence than males; middle aged categories enjoy more Social Competence than other categories; Married enjoy more Social Competence than Not Married; Employed and Homemakers have higher Social

Competence than Pensioners; South Eastern region demonstrate more Social Competence than Northern Harbour and Southern Harbour regions

7. Psychological Health is positively correlated with Security and negatively correlated with Fear of Crime and Worrying about Crime; those who save on air-conditioning costs report less Psychological Health than those who do not; females report less Psychological Health than males; Employed higher Psychological Health than Pensioners and Homemakers
8. Self Esteem is positively correlated with Positive Relative Deprivation; those who do not have a Smart TV report less Self Esteem than those who do; females report less Self Esteem than males; higher age categories enjoy more Self Esteem; Primary level of education enjoys higher Self Esteem; Married enjoy more Self Esteem than Not Married; Pensioners have higher Self Esteem than Students and Employed
9. No evidence for a 'loneliness crisis'

### **0.3 SOCIETAL ISSUES**

1. Public opinion is positively inclined towards decriminalising recreational cannabis and towards directing energy to those in need rather than fighting cannabis use
2. Public opinion is neutral regarding whether cannabis is a gateway drug that leads to the use of more dangerous substances
3. Public opinion is negatively inclined towards the use of cannabis to enhance quality of life
4. There is general agreement with the legalisation of prostitution and with people's ability to buy sex for those who do not enjoy a normal sex life
5. There is slight agreement that people (including women) should have the right to sell sex and that the state should not get involved in the private life of citizens including sexual services
6. Public opinion is negatively inclined towards the right of women to terminate unwanted pregnancies and to decriminalise abortion locally
7. There is a general awareness that the criminalisation of abortion in Malta stigmatizes women who terminate unwanted pregnancies elsewhere in Europe
8. There is a general disagreement with the claim that one should avoid paying taxes if possible and that is one paid tax every time living in Malta would be unaffordable

9. There is marginal agreement with the claim that paying tax is foolish and general agreement with the claim that the majority of Maltese residents avoid paying taxes sometimes
10. Public opinion is significantly skewed in favour of increased governmental scrutiny in fighting cybercrime, that money laundering is a national problem with international consequences and that hacking private accounts and data is a headache for everyone
11. There is general agreement with the right to terminate one's life in cases of suffering

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Human behaviour is a result of a complex interplay of attitudes, beliefs and emotions that together determine the inclination for individuals to act in characteristic ways. These inclinations exercise an influence on individuals beyond the determinacy of whether a particular behaviour is lawful or otherwise. For instance, whilst everyone will concede that stealing is wrong, unlawful and reprehensible, most individuals are nevertheless able to entertain the prospect of stealing if this serves the purpose of saving the life of a loved one (Haidt, 2012). Due to the inherent ambivalence in human nature regarding whether particular courses of action are justifiable and warranted, or otherwise, social institutions are formally endowed with the task of regulating individual conduct for the benefit of the collective. The police force serves a critical role in this domain. Whilst the police do not determine what kinds of behaviour are or are not lawful, they are tasked with both preventing the commission of unlawful acts as well as with the apprehension and prosecution of perpetrators. This matter is far from trivial.

In previous reports (Mifsud, Brockdorff & Sammut, 2021) we investigated the preferences of the Maltese with regards to these two critical competences, that is, the prevention and apprehension of crime. We have also reported that whilst the police forces are generally well regarded by the Maltese public, there were also noteworthy ambivalences with regards to the public's expectations of how the police should exercise their role in society. In this report we delve into further detail by looking more deeply at a range of behaviours the criminality of which is contested in the public domain. We understand that making a certain behaviour lawful or unlawful is the result of processes of contestation that take place in the political arena. For the present purpose, however, we wish to underline the fact that the police are tasked both with prosecuting behaviours that the general public may not be inclined to consider criminal at all, and with overlooking behaviours that might generally be considered criminal but which may not be so at law. Both of these instances result in frustrated appraisals of the police, who are consequently deemed as either preying on the hapless or as incompetent in ascertaining the course of justice. Both instances result in frustrated expectations of the police that may generalise beyond the domain and legitimate duties the police are formally tasked with on behalf of Maltese society and for which they are granted executive powers.



In essence, we understand that the social representation of policing is associated with other social representations (Mifsud, Brockdorff & Sammut, 2021) that include a reference to what is or is not lawful in society (Lima & Castro, 2005; Batel & Castro, 2018) and how different social groups construe others and their behaviours in the social domain (Buhagiar, Sammut, Rochira & Salvatore, 2018; Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020). In this light, we report survey findings regarding three concerns that bear an influence on the social representation of policing. Following a presentation of the methodological undertaking, we proceed to report findings concerning (a) the general level of tolerance exhibited by the Maltese population relative to various socio-ethnic minority groups (b) the relationship between wellbeing and various indicators of confidence in the police, and (c) the distribution of public opinion with regards to politically contested behaviours. We conclude with a discussion of the findings and recommendations regarding the study and treatment of public opinion with regard to the role served by the police.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted between the months of March to June 2021 amongst Maltese residents with a sample of 1000 respondents recruited through a randomised phone number generating procedure. The study investigated various perceptions and opinions about policing, about the three topics detailed, and further gathered demographic data about respondents. The final sample consisted of 481 males and 516 females who identified themselves as Maltese. 51 respondents reported having a primary level of education, 414 a secondary level of education, 211 a post-secondary level of education and 319 reported a tertiary level of education. Respondents' age ranged from a minimum of 16 years of age to a maximum of 85 years of age ( $M=45$ ,  $sd=16.98$ ). Respondents hailed from various geographic locations in the Maltese islands. 82 reported their residence as Gozo, 130 as Northern district, 259 as Northern Harbour, 204 as South Eastern, 191 as Southern Harbour and 134 as Western district. The questionnaire was available in Maltese and English. Respondents were offered the possibility to join a lottery for one of fifty €100 vouchers as a reward for participation. Data was analysed statistically using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS]. Comparative data with 2011 measures was carried out using a dataset gathered for the Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies [MIRIPS] project. Details concerning the constitution of the latter dataset have been published elsewhere (see Sammut & Lauri, 2017).

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### 3.1 TOLERANCE & SECURITY

In our Perceptions of Security Report (Mifsud, Buhagiar, Brockdorff & Sammut, 2019) we reported variable levels of tolerance amongst the Maltese public with regard to different socio-ethnic minority groups. We also reported that these attitudes were associated with perceptions of security in Malta due to the fact that expectations of crime amongst the general public seem to be more rooted in xenophobic concerns than real experiences of crime.

In the present analysis, we found that attitudes towards Western Europeans and Eastern Europeans did not change significantly between 2011 and 2021. Contrarily, both attitudes towards Africans and towards Arabs were significantly more positive in 2021 compared to 2011. Attitudes towards Africans increased from a mean of 29.87 ( $SD = 25.04$ ) in 2011 to a mean of 48.34 ( $SD = 26.31$ ) in 2021 ( $t = 10.289$ ,  $df = 1150$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Attitudes towards Arabs increased from 29.87 ( $SD = 23.22$ ) in 2011 to 48.34 ( $SD = 27.31$ ) in 2021 ( $t = 9.770$ ,  $df = 309.915$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). It is worth noting that for the African group, the change was from a cold to a warm attitude, with 50 being the neutral midpoint on a 100-point scale feeling ‘thermometer’ between cold and warm. For the Arab group, the relative warming of attitudes did not rise higher than the midpoint and remains, if marginally so, in cold territory. As in 2011, the Arab group remains the least valued socio-ethnic group for the Maltese in Malta, relative to other socio-ethnic groups we have studied, as detailed. Overall, the general level of tolerance towards minority socio-ethnic groups exhibited by the Maltese public during this time period rose significantly, from a mean of 32.28 ( $SD = 4.50$ ) in 2011 to a mean of 37.04 ( $sd = 8.64$ ) in 2021 ( $t = 11.156$ ,  $df = 521.658$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). However, this increased level of tolerance was not matched by increased perceptions of security. In fact, neither Cultural Security nor Economic Security saw statistically significant changes during this time period, whilst Personal Security decreased slightly from 12.40 ( $sd = 2.81$ ) in 2011 to 11.94 ( $SD = 3.53$ ) in 2021 ( $t = -1.993$ ,  $df = 322.598$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Overall, the general level of security experienced by the Maltese combining the three aforementioned security types did not change significantly during the past decade.

### 3.2 WELLBEING

We measured Wellbeing using Ward's (1996; see Berry, 2017) classification that describes wellbeing in terms of 'feeling good' and 'doing well'. The former typifies psychological wellbeing whilst the latter typifies social wellbeing. Importantly, one could be doing well but not feeling well, one could be feeling well but not doing well, neither, or both. For this reason, we analyse wellbeing in terms of its underlying components separately. We measure psychological wellbeing by means of two indices, that is, psychological health ( $\alpha=0.92$ ) and self-esteem ( $\alpha=0.84$ ). We measure social wellbeing by means of another two indices, social competence ( $\alpha=0.89$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\alpha=0.76$ ). We deemed the study of wellbeing pertinent to the present inquiry in light of criminological literature reporting an association between crime, fear of crime and wellbeing (e.g. Lorenc et al., 2012; Pearson & Breetzke, 2014). These findings are rooted in the theory of the Chicago School of Criminology, which claims that crime as well as victimhood tend to be geographically localised. The implication of this is that one would expect a negative relationship between wellbeing and fear of crime, such that those living in certain neighbourhoods would be expected to experience more crime, to be more fearful of and more worried about crime, and to have lower positive perceptions and trust in the police. These tendencies are expected to demonstrate an adverse effect on their psychological and social wellbeing. On the other hand, those living in neighbourhoods with low crime are expected to demonstrate less fear of and less worry about crime, more trust and positive perceptions of the police, along with a higher sense of personal and social wellbeing.

In the present study, we found that Life Satisfaction was positively correlated<sup>1</sup> with Positive Relative Deprivation ( $r=0.278$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Police Trust ( $r=0.258$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), whilst Social Competence was positively correlated with Security ( $r=0.253$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In other words, the more life satisfaction individuals experienced, the better they rated their socioeconomic status relative to peers and the more they perceived the police as trustworthy. Moreover, the more social competence individuals reported, the more security they experienced and vice-versa. We also found that Psychological Health was also positively correlated with Security ( $r=0.276$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and negatively correlated with Fear of Crime ( $r=-0.207$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Worrying about Crime ( $r=-0.204$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In other words, the more individuals were afraid of crime and worried about crime, the worse their psychological

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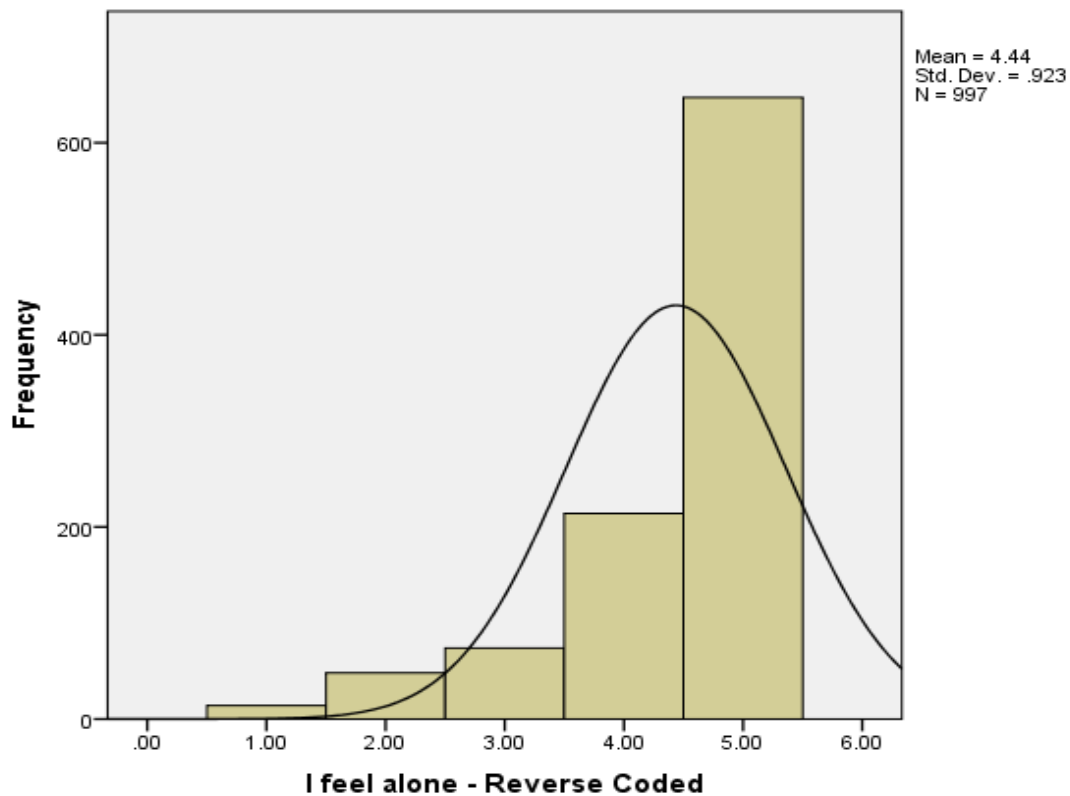
<sup>1</sup> We report only statistically significant correlations higher than 0.2

health, whilst the more secure they felt, the higher their psychological health. Finally, we found Self-Esteem to be positively correlated with Positive Relative Deprivation ( $r=0.264$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) in line with the dictates of Social Identity Theory (Turner & Oakes, 1986), which predicates that positive interpersonal and intergroup comparisons bolster self-esteem. In a nutshell, the better the level of social competence individuals experienced and the better their psychological health, the stronger their feelings of security; the higher their sense of self-esteem, the better they rated themselves relative to others. In turn, the better they rated themselves, the more life satisfaction they reported and the higher their trust in the police. Conversely, the worse their psychological health, the more they reported fearing crime and worrying about it.

The analysis of the 4 wellbeing variables in terms of demographic criteria yields additional insight. As detailed above, we found that Life Satisfaction and Self-Esteem were both positively correlated with Positive Relative Deprivation. In fact, both Psychological Health ( $r=.0150$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Social Competence ( $r=0.171$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were weakly but significantly correlated with Positive Relative Deprivation. In this light, we conducted further analyses using demographic categories of various possessions to indicate socioeconomic status. In our sample, the number of participants reporting they did not have access to a Telephone ( $n=4$ ), a Motor Vehicle ( $n=2$ ), and a Washing Machine ( $n=38$ ) was too low to enable meaningful comparisons. We analysed instead differences in wellbeing for those reporting no access to a Computer ( $n=63$ ), a Smart TV ( $n=140$ ), Air-conditioning ( $n=114$ ), and those who reported that they sometimes do not switch on their air-conditioning units to save on electricity ( $n=428$ ) with those who reported they had access to the above. We found that Social Competence was significantly less for those who did not have a Computer ( $t=3.178$ ,  $df=983$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), that Life Satisfaction was significantly less for those who did not have Air-conditioning ( $t=2.622$ ,  $df=982$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), that Psychological Health was significantly less for those who saved on electricity costs when deciding to use air-conditioning ( $t=-2.266$ ,  $df=857.997$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), and that Life Satisfaction ( $t=3.178$ ,  $df=983$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), Self-Esteem ( $t=2.107$ ,  $df=972$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and Social Competence ( $t=2.68$ ,  $df=923$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) were significantly less for those who did not have access to a Smart TV. We further found that all four wellbeing variables were weakly but significantly correlated with the extent of one's social network, that is, the more friends respondents claimed they had the higher their Life Satisfaction, ( $r=0.129$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), Social Competence ( $r=0.074$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), Self Esteem ( $r=0.2$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Psychological Health ( $r=0.149$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Also, the better respondents rated their

personal health, the higher their Life Satisfaction ( $r=0.179$ ,  $p<0.01$ ); Self Esteem ( $r=0.097$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Psychological Health ( $r=0.284$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Finally, in light of the claim that loneliness has reached crisis levels in Malta (Clark, Azzopardi & Bonnici, 2019), we examined the item single item ‘I feel alone’<sup>2</sup> pertaining to the Psychological Health index used in this study. We found that the mean for this measure ( $M=4.44$ ,  $SD=0.923$ ) was heavily skewed in a negative direction (Skew= -1.768,  $SE=.077$ ) and that the distribution was leptokurtic (Kurtosis: 2.592,  $SE=0.155$ ), that is, showing a significant spike on the positive side of this measure (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



We proceeded to analyse the demographic variability on each of the wellbeing indices. We found that females reported lower Self Esteem ( $t=-2.499$ ,  $df=970$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and lower Psychological Health ( $t=-4.429$ ,  $df=959.405$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) but more Social Competence ( $t=4.118$ ,  $df=856.79$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) than Males. We found significant difference in Self Esteem

<sup>2</sup> Strongly Agree = 14, Agree = 48, Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 74, Disagree = 214, Strongly Disagree = 647

( $F=4.446$ ,  $df=5$ , 969,  $p<0.01$ ) and Social Competence ( $F=9.943$ ,  $df=8$ , 921,  $p<0.01$ ) between the various age groups. The Age Category 66+ demonstrated higher Self Esteem than all other categories except the 56-65; the 46-55 demonstrated more Social Competence than all other categories except the 56-65, which itself was also significantly higher relative to the 66+. We found that Education was associated with differences in Self Esteem ( $F=3.869$ ,  $df=3$ , 966,  $p<0.01$ ), that is, Primary level of education reported more Self Esteem than Post-Secondary and Tertiary. We found that Relationship Status was associated with differences in Life Satisfaction ( $F=3.305$ ,  $df=3$ , 972,  $p<0.05$ ), Self Esteem ( $F=2.755$ ,  $df=3$ , 961,  $p<0.05$ ) and Social Competence ( $F=6.767$ ,  $df=3$ , 914,  $p<0.01$ ). Specifically, the category Married demonstrated more Life Satisfaction than Widowed/Divorced/Annulled category, more Self Esteem and more Social Competence than the Not Married category. Occupational status was associated with differences in Self Esteem ( $F=4.127$ ,  $df=4$ , 966,  $p<0.01$ ), Psychological Health ( $F=7.157$ ,  $df=4$ , 955,  $p<0.01$ ) & Social Competence ( $F=4.812$ ,  $df=4$ , 920,  $p<0.01$ ). Specifically, Pensioners reported higher Self Esteem than Students and the Employed; the Employed demonstrated higher Psychological Health than Pensioners and Homemakers; and the Employed and Homemakers demonstrated higher Social Competence than Pensioners. We also found statistically significant differences in Life Satisfaction ( $F=5.236$ ,  $df=5$ , 980,  $p<0.01$ ) and Social Competence ( $F=4.398$ ,  $df=5$ , 921,  $p<0.01$ ) across geographical regions. Specifically, respondents in the Western Region reported more Life Satisfaction than respondents in the South Eastern and Southern Harbour Region, whilst respondents in the Northern region were also significantly higher than respondents in the Southern Harbour region on this measure. On the other hand, respondents in the South Eastern region reported more Social Competence than those in the Northern Harbour and Southern Harbour regions.

Finally, as we reported above, we compared the mean scores of each of the four wellbeing scales with the same measures taken in 2011. We found statistically significant increases during this time period in Life Satisfaction ( $t=-2.297$ ,  $df=241.02$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), Psychological Health ( $t=-8.156$ ,  $df=316.516$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and Social Competence ( $t=-8.301$ ,  $df=255.634$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The difference in Self Esteem was not statistically significant.

### 3.3. PUBLIC OPINION ON DEBATABLE SOCIETAL ISSUES

We studied public opinion with regards to six issues that are presently being debated in the Maltese public. These issues involve a range of behaviours that are politically disputed in terms of their legality. However, the task of policing nevertheless requires particular actions by the Malta Police Force that may or may not enjoy popular support. The police may, in some instances, be required to prosecute behaviours that the public may generally not consider criminal, or overlook behaviours that the public may deem punishable but which are not prohibited at law. In this light, the study of public opinion is insightful. We studied public opinion regarding (a) recreational cannabis, (b) prostitution, (c) abortion, (d) tax evasion, (e) cybercrime, and (f) euthanasia. We understand that all these issues are very complex and that public opinion may include nuanced perspectives that deal with the multidimensional nature of these behaviours. We therefore proceeded to source a range of claims concerning these issues that have circulated in public as arguments for or against particular standpoints. We favoured such an approach over a dichotomous Agree/Disagree response as we find that a nuanced study of these issues sheds light on which direction public opinion leans as well as why. We proceed therefore to analyse our measures by looking at the mean response over the entire sample. Responses were gathered on a 5-point Likert scale with 3 representing the Neutral midpoint between Agreement and Disagreement. We also present findings concerning the Skew & Kurtosis of the distributions, as these, in simple terms, reveal the statistical lean across the sample. It is worth bearing in mind that pluralistic societies typically demonstrate diversified opinions including contrasting opinions. It is therefore unlikely to expect full agreement or disagreement with any particular issue. However, it is reasonable to expect that responses are normally distributed, which means to say that many would be expected to be slightly for and slightly against, a smaller proportion to be strongly for or against, and for public opinion to be split equally between for and against. We analyse the leaning of public opinion in one direction or another to determine whether the lean is statistically significant. A skew statistic higher than 0.5 is considered somewhat skewed, and a statistic over 1.0 is considered highly skewed. We also analyse the kurtosis of these distributions to determine how spread out the range of responses is across the 5-point Likert scale, that is, whether there is a broad range across the sample or whether a particular point on the scale demonstrate a significant spike. A Kurtosis statistic above 0.5 is considered moderate and a statistic over 1.0 is considered high. We present graphical illustrations of each



distribution along with relevant statistics to enable ease of interpretation against a hypothetical normal distribution.

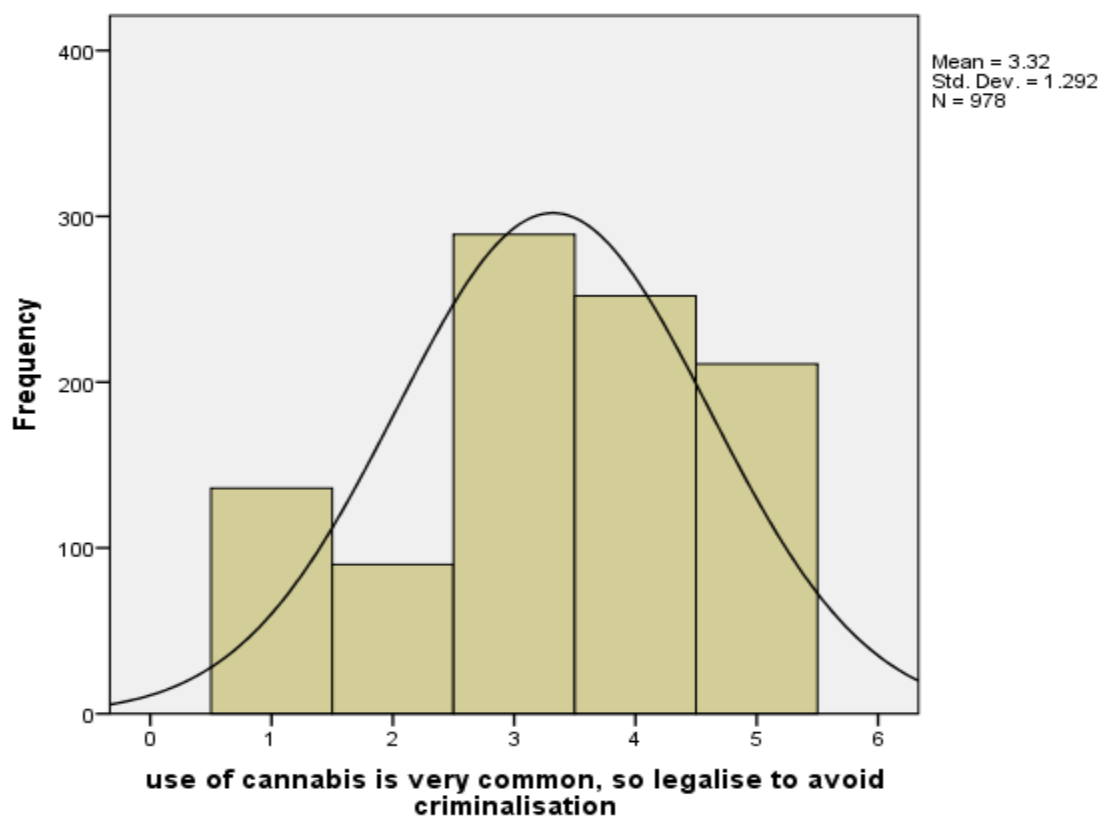
### 3.3.1 Cannabis

We asked respondents whether they agreed with the following claims:

- (i) The use of cannabis is very common, so the use of cannabis should be legalised to avoid criminalisation

The mean response for this measure was 3.32 ( $SD=1.292$ ) indicating mild agreement with the statement. The distribution demonstrated moderate kurtosis (-0.810) representing a higher than expected spread across the range of responses.

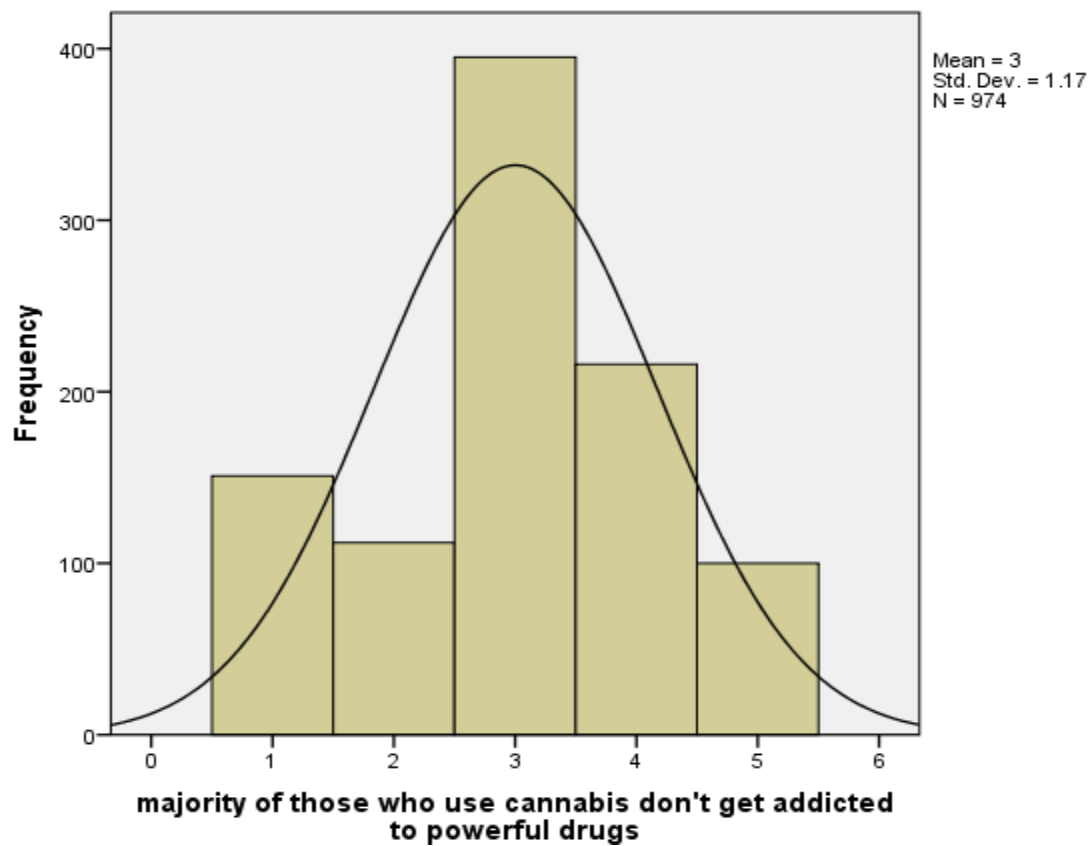
**Figure 2**



- (ii) The majority of people who use cannabis don't go on to become addicted to more powerful drugs

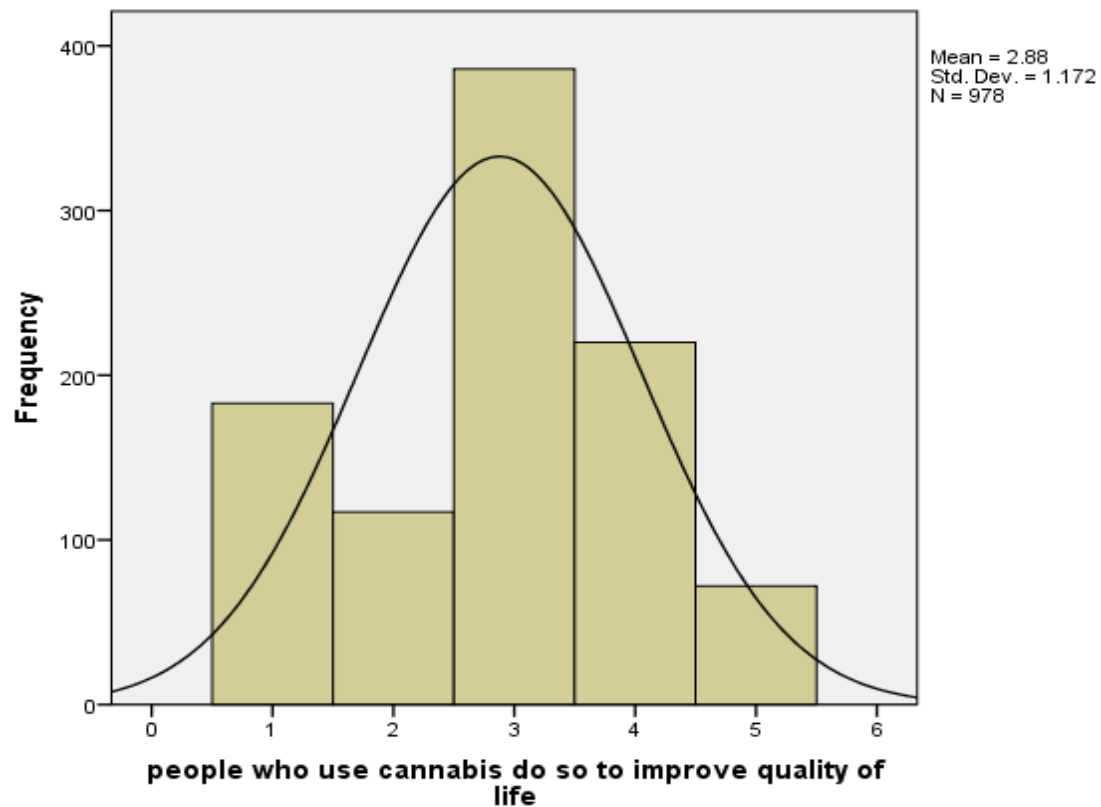
The mean response for this item was 3 ( $SD=1.17$ ), indicating a neutral inclination in public opinion overall. The distribution demonstrated moderate kurtosis ( $-0.611$ ) representing a higher than expected spread across the range of responses.

**Figure 3**



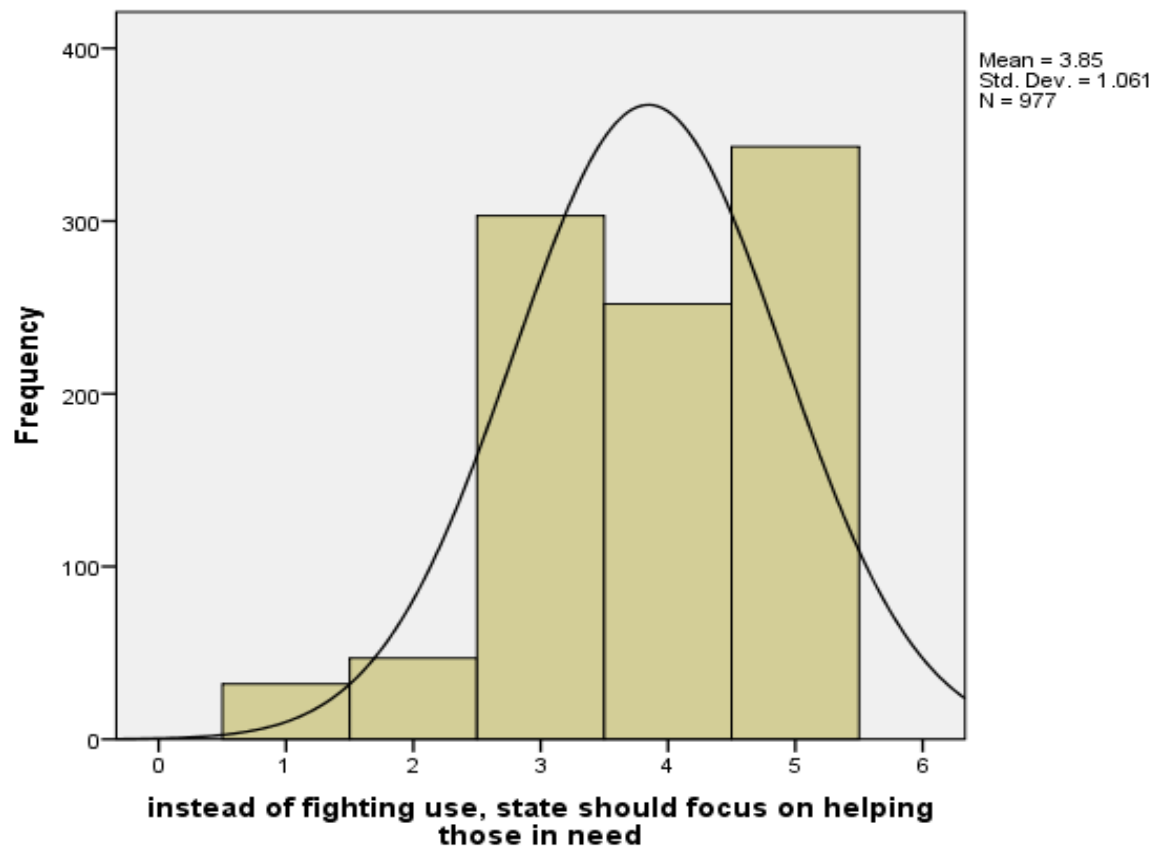
- (iii) People who use cannabis regularly do so to improve their quality of life

The mean response for this item was 2.88 ( $SD=1.172$ ), indicating slight disagreement with the statement. The distribution demonstrated moderate kurtosis ( $-0.743$ ) representing a higher than expected spread across the range of responses.

**Figure 4**

- (iv) Instead of fighting against the use of cannabis, the state should focus more on helping those in need

The mean response for this statement was 3.85 ( $SD=1.061$ ), indicating moderate agreement with the statement. The distribution demonstrated a moderately significant skew ( $-0.593$ ), meaning that public opinion leaned significantly towards agreement with the statement.

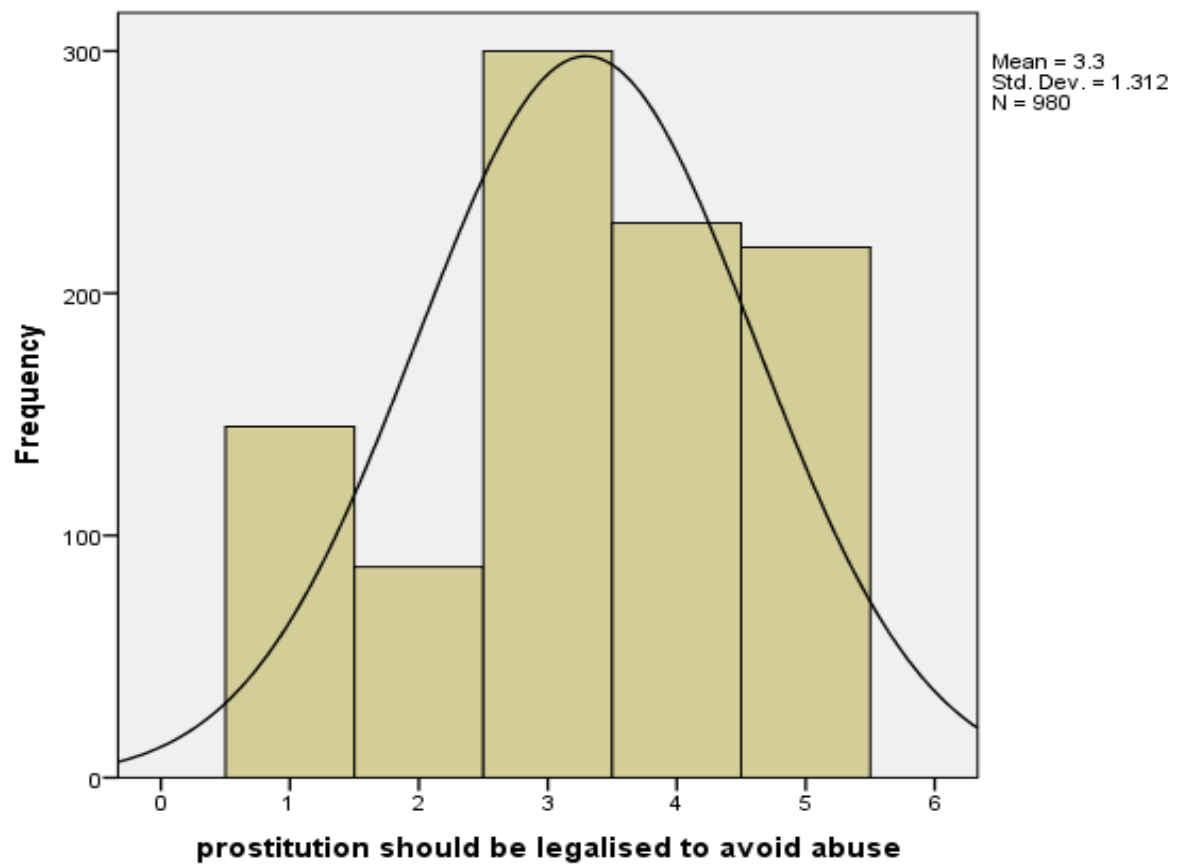
**Figure 5**

### 3.3.2 Prostitution

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagree with the following statements:

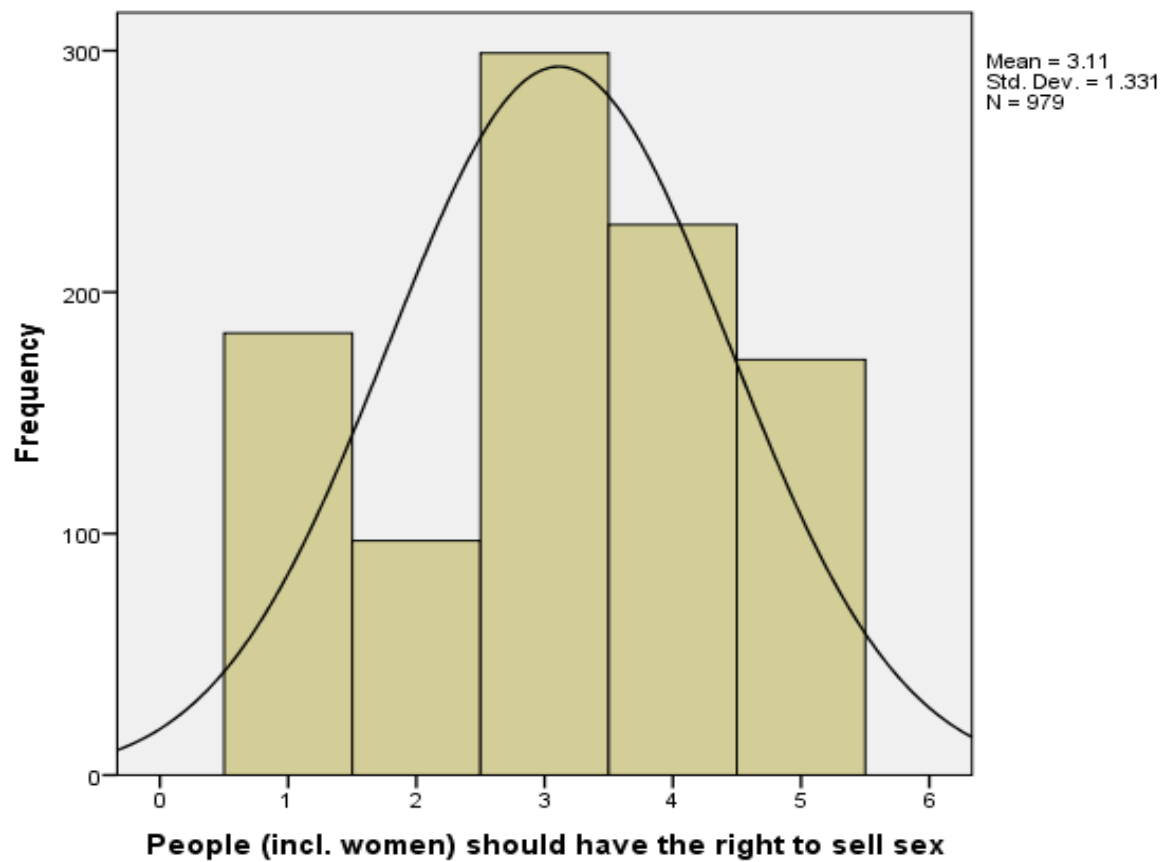
- (i) Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world, so it should be legalised in order to avoid abuse

The mean response for this item tended slightly towards agreement ( $M=3.3$ ,  $SD=1.312$ ). The distribution demonstrated a moderate spread of responses ( $-0.868$ ) across the range.

**Figure 6**

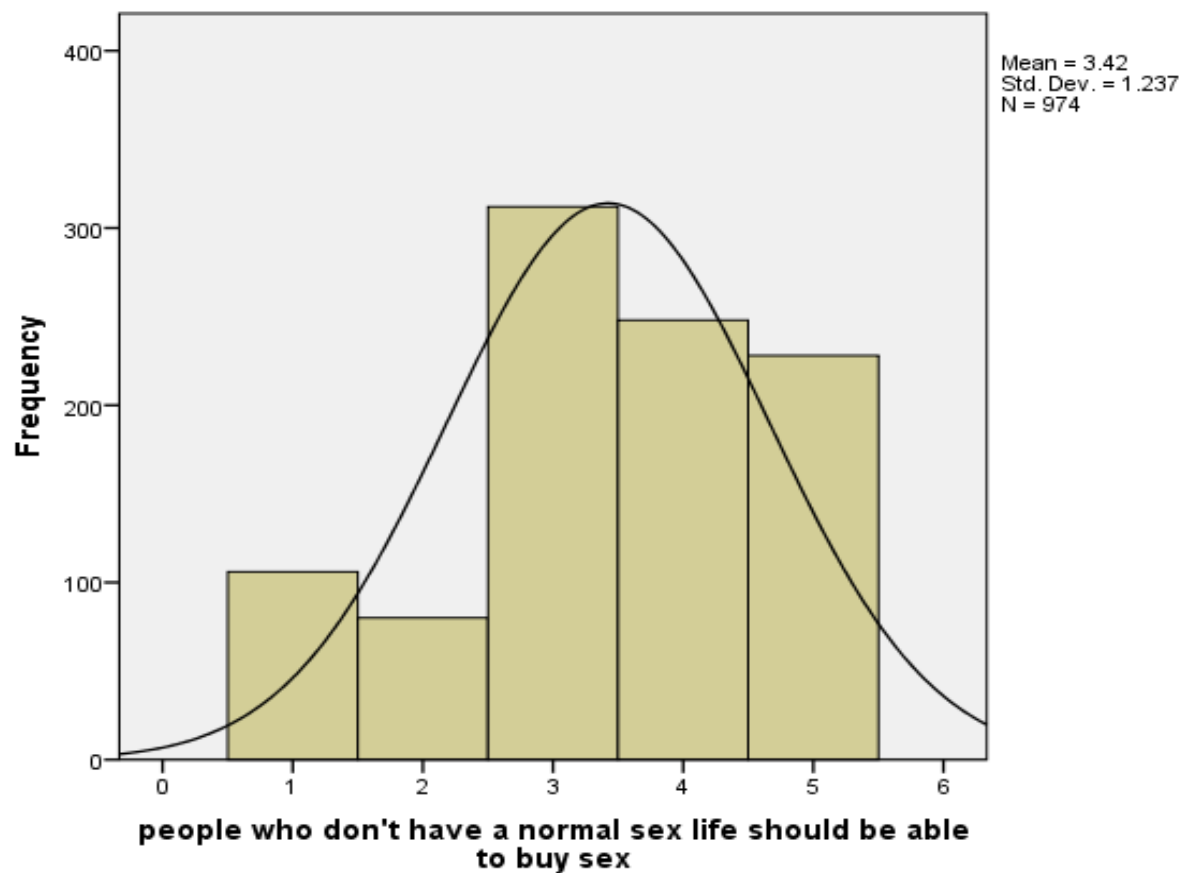
- (ii) People, including women, should have a right to sell sexual services, if they wish

The mean response for this item was 3.11 ( $SD=1.331$ ). The distribution demonstrated a broad spread of responses (-1.005) across the range.

**Figure 7**

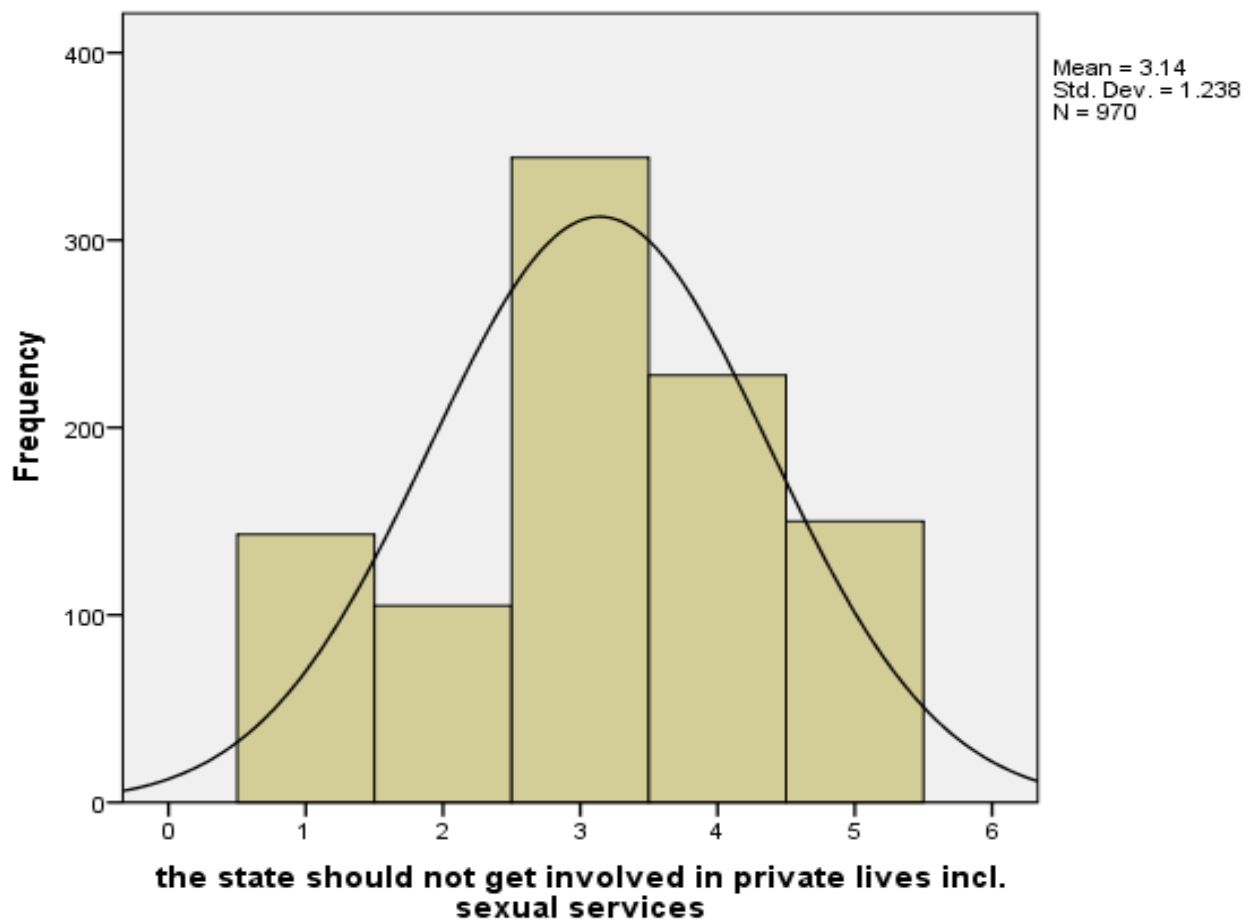
- (iii) People who don't have a normal sexual relationship, for whatever the reason, should have a means to buy sexual services without becoming criminalised for this

The mean response was 3.42 ( $SD = 1.237$ ), indicating slight agreement. The distribution demonstrated a moderate spread of responses ( $-0.614$ ) across the range.

**Figure 8**

- (iv) The state should not have a right to get involved in the citizen's private lives, including cases of consent regarding the buying and selling of sexual services

The mean response was 3.14 ( $SD=1.238$ ). The distribution demonstrated a moderate spread of responses (-0.757) across the range.

**Figure 9**

### 3.3.3 Abortion

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following claims:

- (i) Women should have full and absolute rights over their own body, including the right to abort an unwanted pregnancy

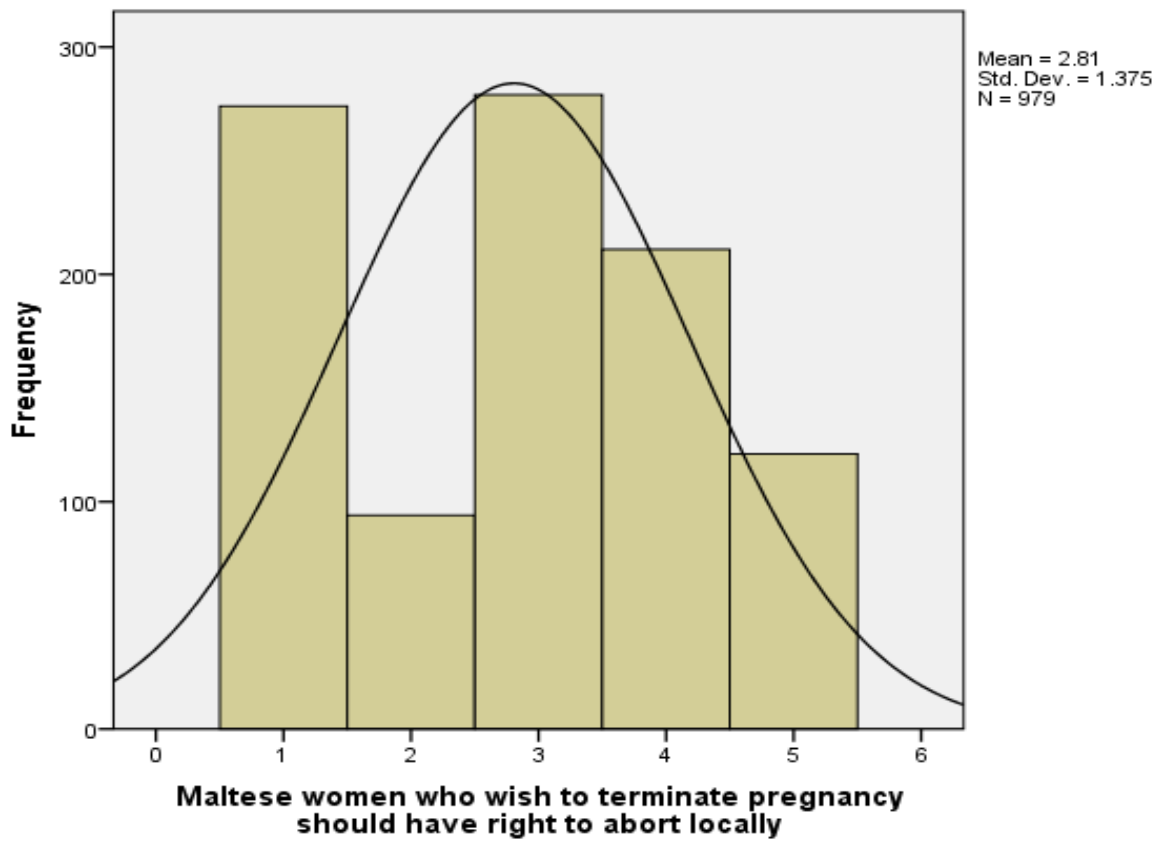
The mean response was slightly negative ( $M=2.77$ ,  $SD=1.379$ ). The distribution demonstrated a broad range (-1.225).



**Figure 10**

- (ii) Maltese women who wish to abort an unwanted pregnancy, should have a right to do so locally, even if others disagree with their choice

The mean response for this item was also slightly negative ( $M=2.81$ ,  $SD=1.375$ ). The distribution demonstrated a similarly broad range to the above statement (-1.227).

**Figure 11**

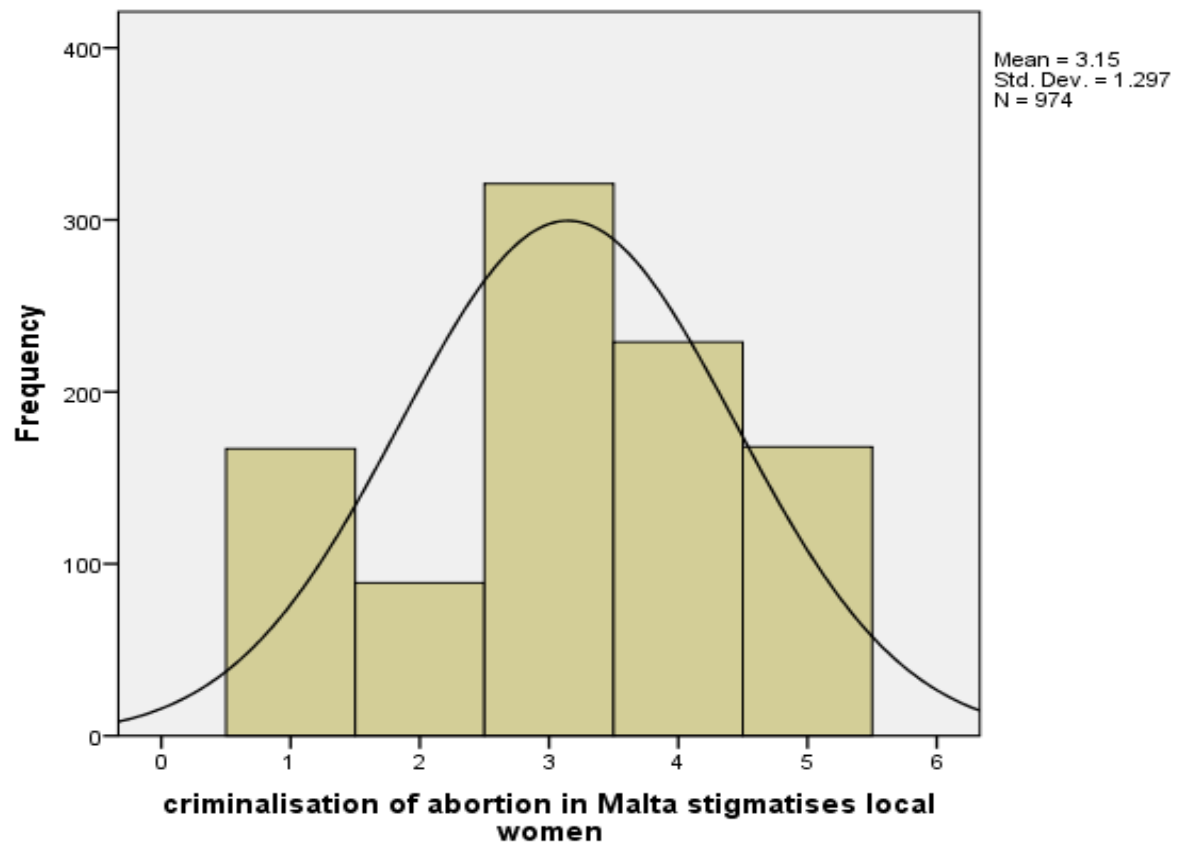
- (iii) Women who don't have the means to carry out an abortion in another European country, should not be criminalised if they do so in Malta

The mean response was 2.9 ( $SD=1.377$ ), that is, marginally lower than the neutral midpoint. The distribution also demonstrated a broad range ( $-1.177$ ).

**Figure 12**

- (iv) The criminalisation of abortion in Malta leaves a negative impression of women who do it even if it is normal to do so in every other European country

The mean for this item, by contrast, was slightly positive ( $M=3.15$ ,  $SD=1.297$ ). The distribution demonstrated a moderate range (-0.890).

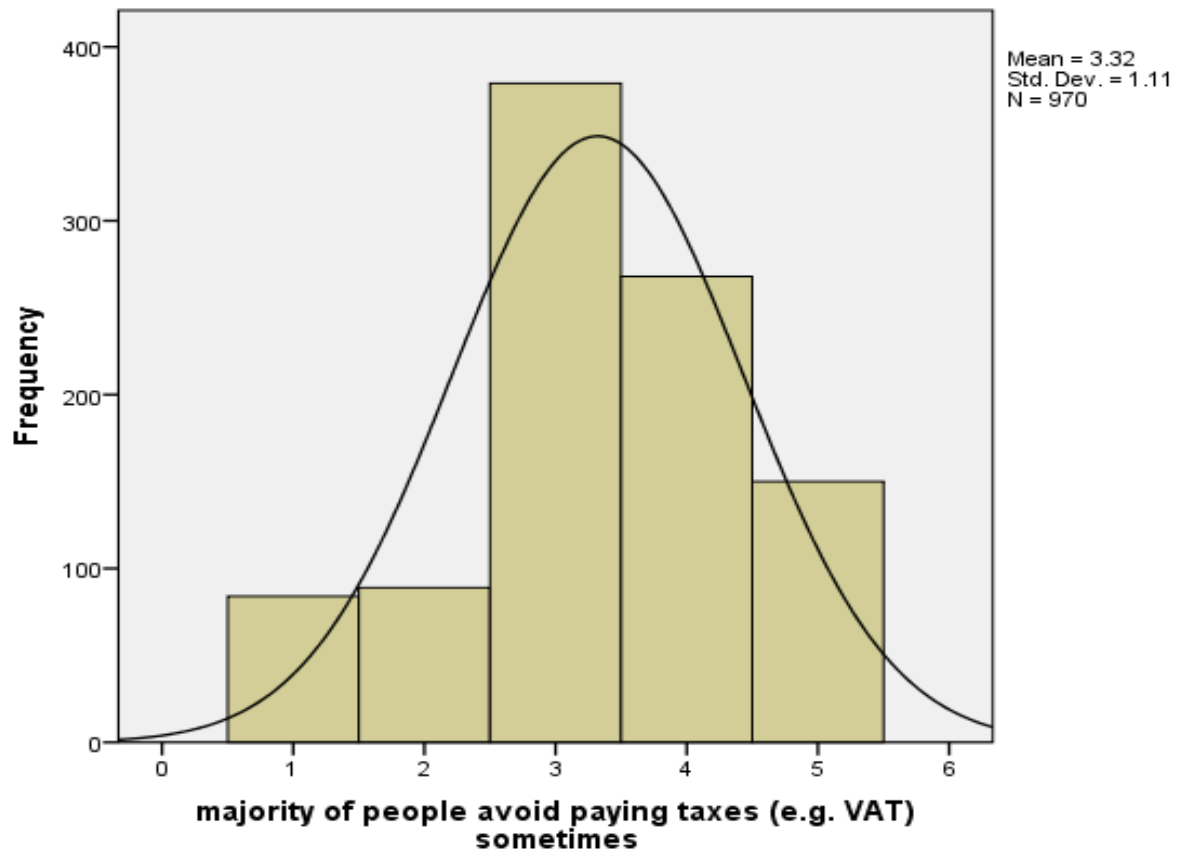
**Figure 13**

### 3.3.4 Tax avoidance

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following items:

- (i) The majority of people avoid paying tax (like VAT) sometimes

The mean for this item was slightly positive ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=1.11$ ). The distribution of responses on this measure was normal.

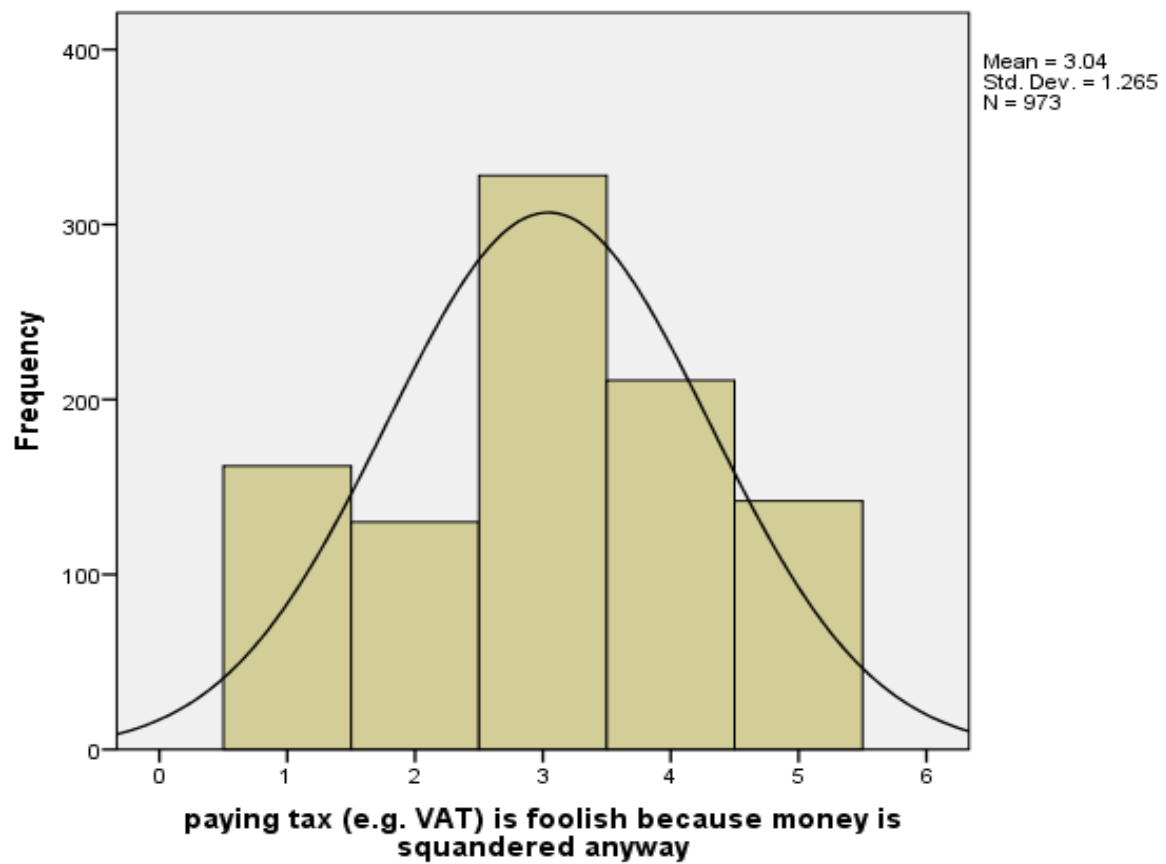
**Figure 14**

- (ii) To pay tax (like VAT) when you can avoid paying it is foolish because public money is squandered anyway

The mean for this item was marginally higher than the neutral midpoint ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.265$ ).

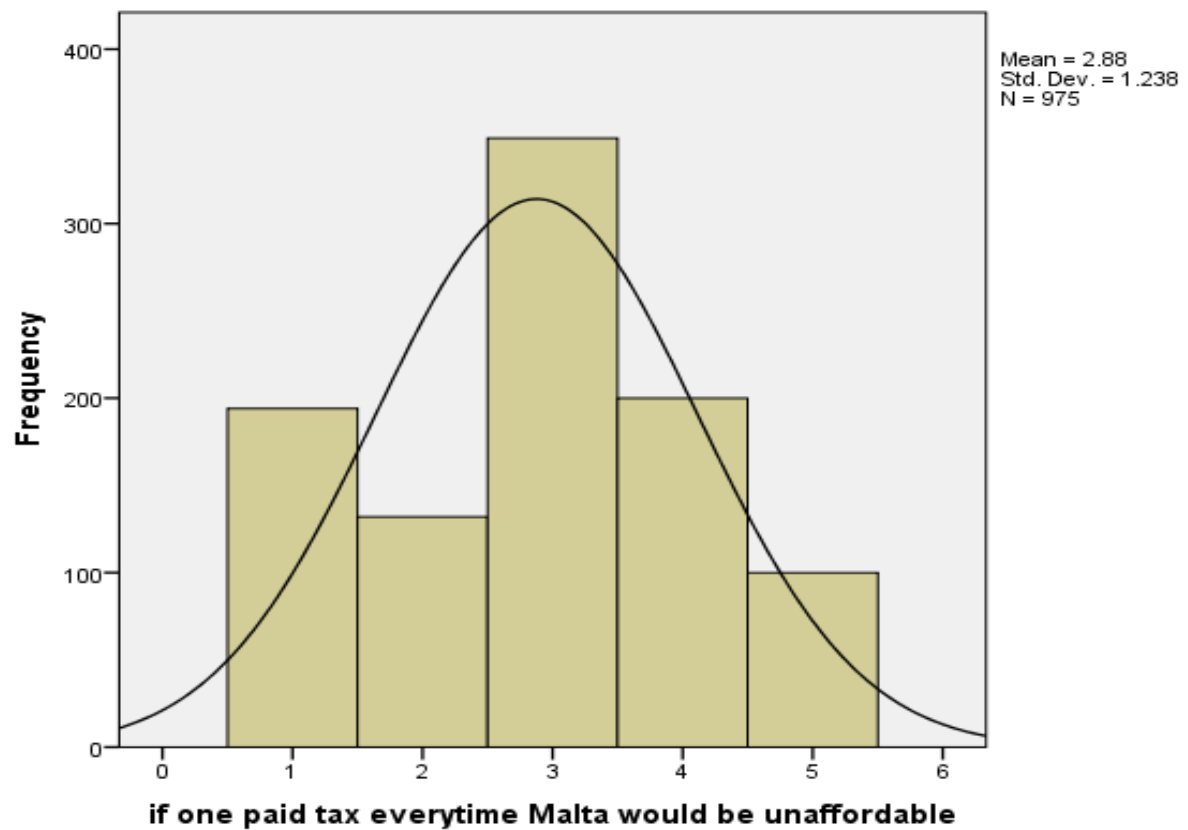
The distribution on this measure was moderately broad ( $-0.893$ ).

Figure 15



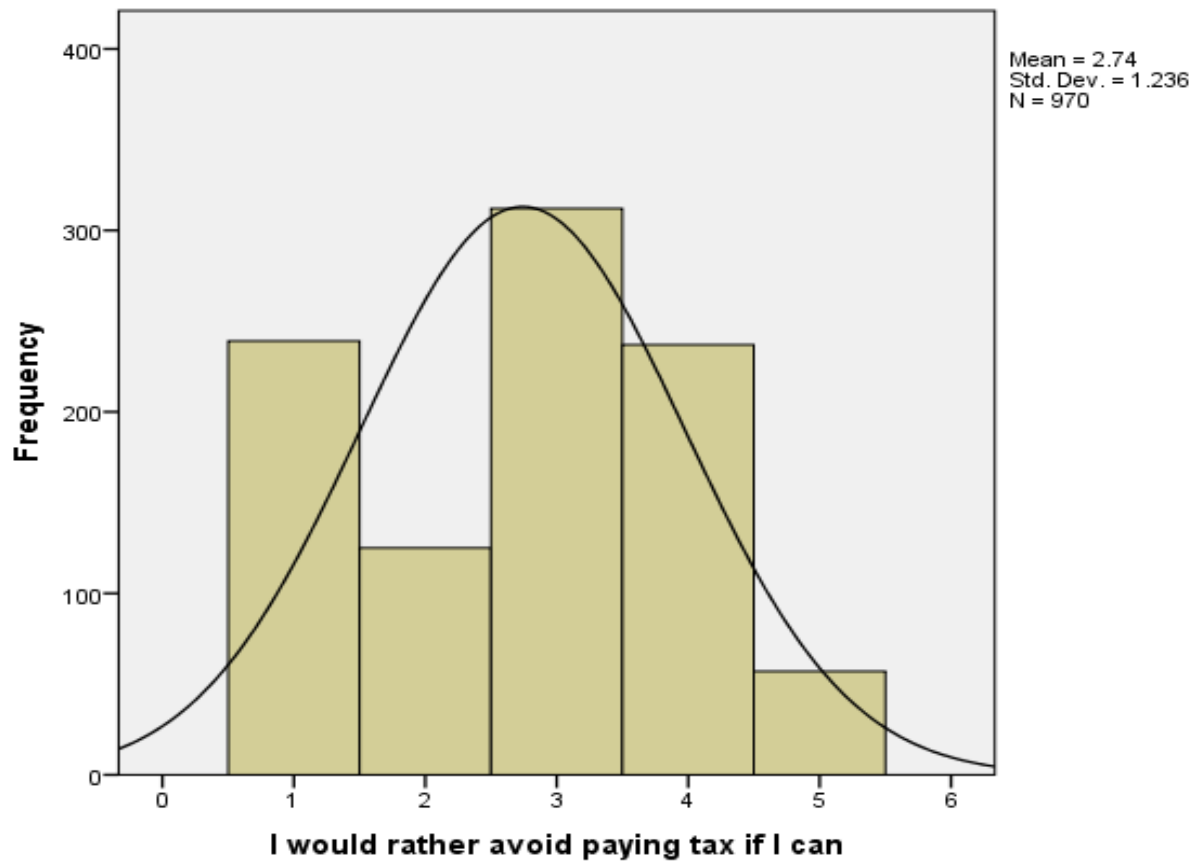
- (iii) If one were to pay tax every time, living in Malta would be unaffordable

The mean for this item was slightly negative ( $M=2.88$ ,  $SD=1.238$ ). The distribution on this measure was moderately broad ( $-0.884$ ).

**Figure 16**

- (iv) Sometimes one has to pay some taxes, like VAT, but I would rather avoid it if I can

The mean for this item was also slightly negative ( $M=2.74$ ,  $SD=1.236$ ). The distribution on this measure was broad (-1.090).

**Figure 17**

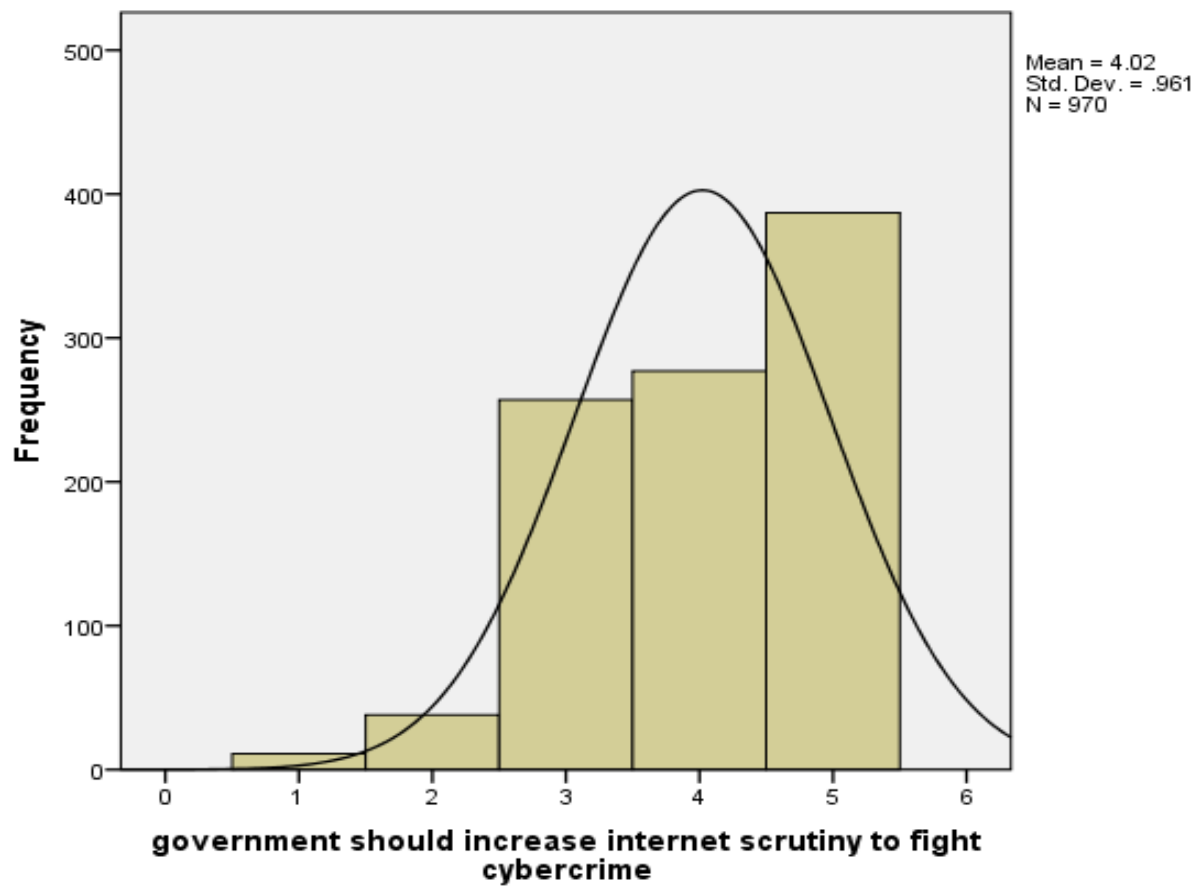
### 3.3.5 Cybercrime

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following items:

- (i) Cybercrime has become a serious problem and the government has to increase scrutiny of the internet to get hold of this crime

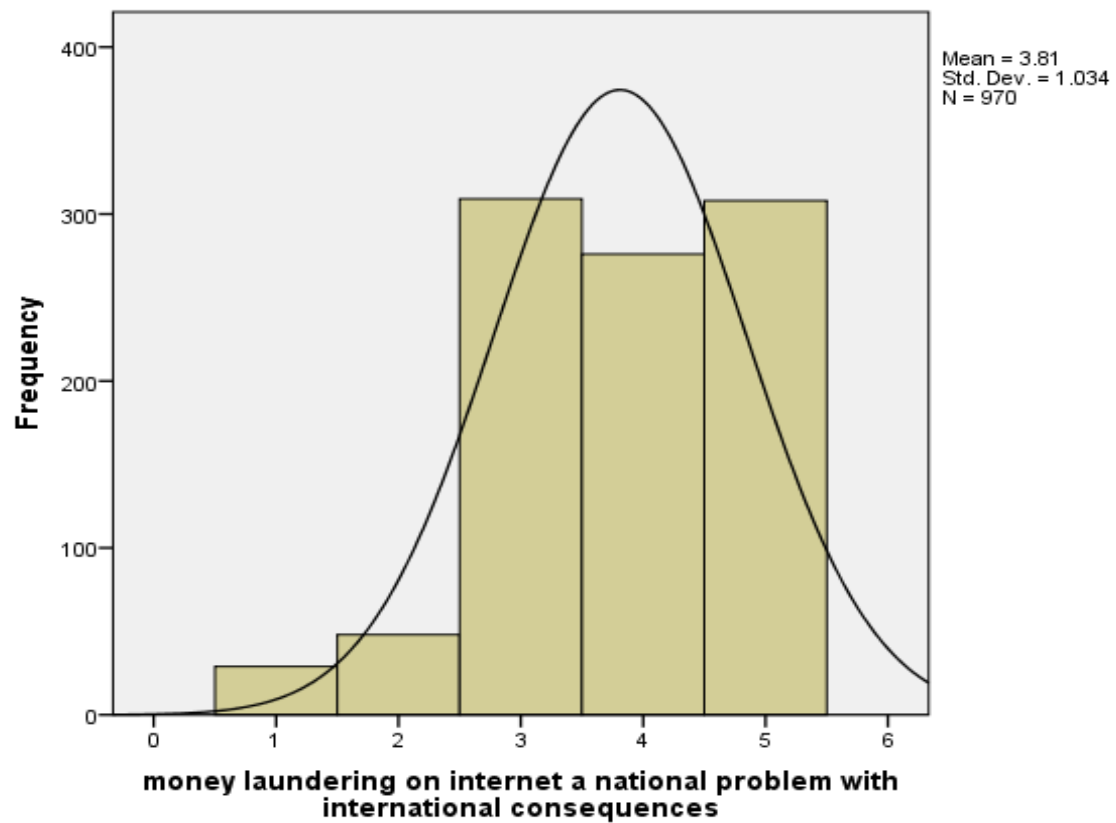
The mean response for this item was positive ( $M=4.02$ ,  $SD=0.961$ ) and the distribution was significantly skewed towards agreement ( $-0.617$ ).



**Figure 18**

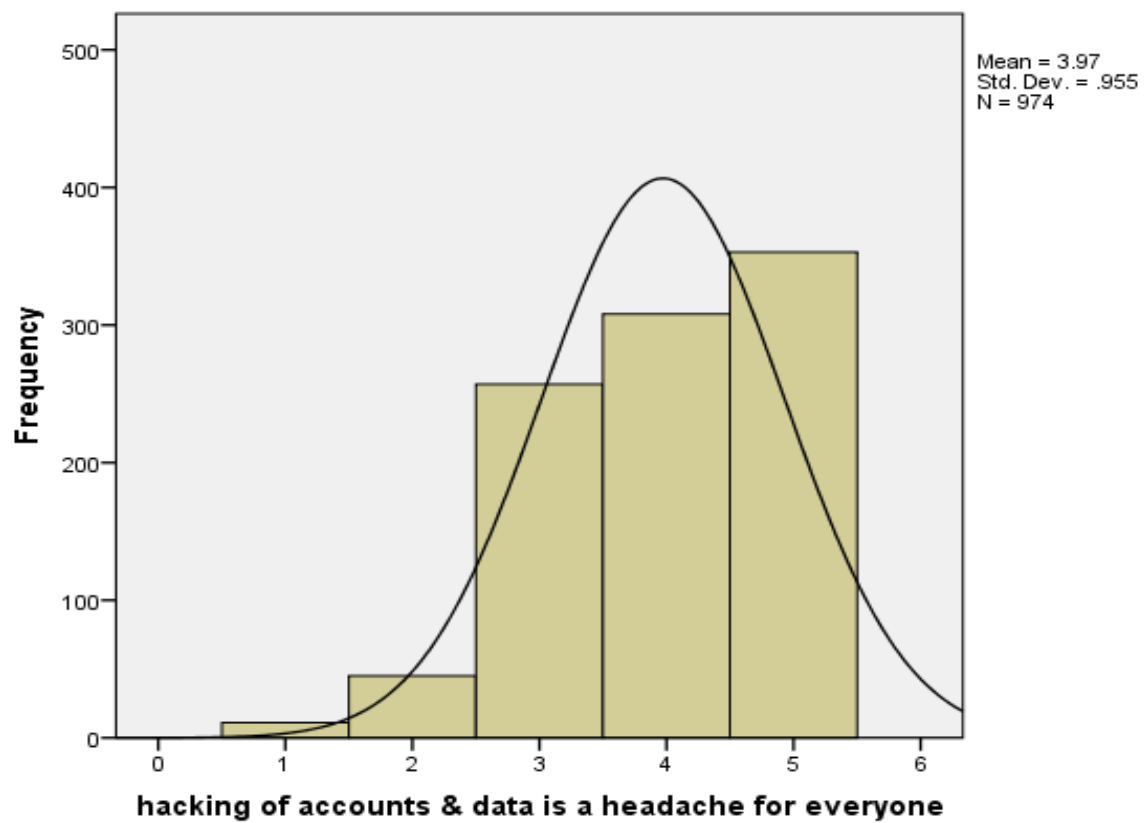
- (ii) Money laundering using the internet has become a problem of national proportions with international consequences

The mean response for this item was also positive ( $M=3.81$ ,  $SD=1.034$ ) and the distribution similarly skewed towards agreement ( $-0.536$ ).

**Figure 19**

- (iii) Hacking of private accounts and private online data has become a headache for everyone nowadays

The mean response for this item was positive too ( $M=3.97$ ,  $SD=0.955$ ) and the distribution significantly skewed towards agreement ( $-0.575$ ).

**Figure 20**

### 3.3.6 Euthanasia

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following item:

- (i) People have different beliefs nowadays so those who are suffering and wish to end their lives should be allowed to do so

The mean response for this item was 3.27 ( $SD=1.357$ ). The distribution demonstrates a broad range (-0.947).

**Figure 21**

#### 4.0 DISCUSSION

The issue of immigration has been a recurring concern in Malta over the past years (Sammut & Lauri, 2017; Buhagiar, Sammut, Rochira & Salvatore, 2018; Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020). Xenophobia has been demonstrated to be a primary fear of crime concern, with a high number of Maltese citizens, relative to those who actually experience crime, expecting to fall victim to either theft or violence in the near future. Whilst this state of affairs remains current, Maltese public opinion has made great strides over the past decade. The level of tolerance demonstrated by the Maltese public towards other socio-ethnic groups has increased significantly during this time period. More specifically, attitudes towards marginalised groups (see Sammut & Lauri, 2017) improved significantly with African immigrants rated positively and Arab immigrants rated marginally negatively. A number of reasons could explain this warming of attitudes. Firstly, increased intergroup contact over time typically results in a natural reduction of prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) as individuals realise that members of different socio-ethnic communities they encounter differ from the stereotypes people hold of them. This is known as the Contact Hypothesis in social psychological literature. Secondly, the Maltese government's Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan (Human Rights & Integration Directorate, 2017) may have contributed to a relative warming of attitudes by emphasizing integration and belonging. This may have lessened the cultural distance between native Maltese and migrants. Thirdly, the Covid-19 pandemic may have precipitated a widespread recognition of the fact that immigrants play a vital role in Maltese society. Against this largely positive backdrop, it is worth noting, however, that different socio-ethnic groups are still appraised differently and that this hierarchy of value still sees some immigrants better liked than others. The disparity of value is a clear cause for concern and demonstrates that this issue requires further attention.

Wellbeing has also increased significantly over the past decade in three domains, that is, Life Satisfaction, Psychological Health and Social Competence. This is not surprising in light of the economic progress registered by Malta over the same period, which saw its GDP double from €6.4 billion in 2011 to €12.8 billion in 2020 (NSO, 2012, 2021). The link between income and wellbeing is well established in economic literature (Clark, Frijters & Shields, 2008). We found support for the hypothesis that wellbeing is associated with relative deprivation as well with other socioeconomic criteria such as owning a computer, owning a Smart TV, having air-conditioning and being able to afford using it. Predictably, we found

that wellbeing is associated with both health and social networks. We found no support for a claimed loneliness crisis. We further found differences in wellbeing between males and females, age categories, educational level, relationship status, occupational status, as well as district of residence.

More pertinent to the present inquiry, we found support for the hypothesis that wellbeing is associated with perceptions of crime. In our study, trust in the police, perceptions of security, fear of crime, and worrying about crime were also related to dimensions of wellbeing. These findings suggest that wellbeing and experiences of crime are interrelated, as predicted by the Chicago School. That is, if one resides in high crime areas, one is more likely to be more concerned with crime, more likely to experience crime and to worry about it, less likely to trust in the police to resolve the issue and, consequently, suffer low personal and social wellbeing. If one resides in low crime areas, by contrast, one is understandably less worried and concerned about crime and more trusting of the police and their ability to do their job well. As a result, one enjoys a better quality of life and an enhanced state of wellbeing overall. However, the inverse is also plausible, that is, an individual who enjoys high wellbeing (perhaps due to personality dispositions, see E. & Diener, 2009) is also more likely to be upbeat about their environment, to be less worried and concerned about crime and more happy with the police. Conversely, an individual whose disposition is downbeat and who, consequently, suffers from low psychological and social wellbeing is also more likely to be negative about perceptions and expectations of crime and less satisfied with the efforts undertaken by the police. Whilst the precise causal relationship between these variables is beyond the scope of the present inquiry, the co-occurrence of these interrelated variables remains insightful and points to the need of localised policing strategies that cater to the characteristic demands of particular neighbourhoods.

With regard to debatable social issues, we found that public opinion with regards to cannabis involves a mixed and nuanced response. With regards to consumption, public opinion tends towards the view that cannabis should be legalised due to its pervasiveness. Public opinion is neutral with regards to cannabis' potential as a gateway drug. On the other hand, public opinion tends toward disagreement with the view that recreational cannabis improves quality of life. By contrast, public opinion leans significantly towards the view that the state should focus on helping those in need rather than fight cannabis consumption. The issue of prostitution demonstrates a relatively more favourable appraisal. Public opinion tends towards the view that prostitution should be legalised to prevent abuse and that those who do

not enjoy normal sexual relations, for whatever reason, should have a legal remedy to acquire them. Although less pronounced, public opinion also tends slightly towards the views that people, including women, should have a right to sell sexual services if they wish and that the state should not get involved in consensual sexual relations including commercial ones. It is worth noting, however, that all four distributions demonstrated broad to moderate spreads across the range of responses, which indicates that public opinion is diverse on not unified on any of these four perspectives. The issue of abortion, which like prostitution entails arguments concerning individual rights (especially female) over one's body, receives a wholly opposite response. Similar to the former issue, public opinion is again broadly to moderately distributed, indicating a wide variety of views on the topic circulating in the Maltese public. However, whilst conceding that the criminalisation of abortion stigmatizes women in Malta even though this is discrepant with every other European country, public opinion nevertheless leans towards the views that women should not have absolute rights over their own bodies, that local legal remedies should be available to mothers who wish to abort, and that those who do so in Malta should not be criminalised. The stigmatisation that ensues seems to be a side effect that public opinion in Malta is happy to live with. And in the same vein of individual human rights, public opinion also tended towards the view that euthanasia should be legally permissible, although the distribution of views on this topic was rather broad.

The issue of taxation received a mixed response. Whilst respondents tended to disagree that preferably taxes are avoided and that paying taxes makes life in Malta unaffordable, public opinion tended slightly towards the view that paying tax when one can avoid to do so is foolish and more strongly towards the view that the majority of people avoid paying taxes sometimes. The latter statement was also normally distributed, whilst the other items demonstrated broad to moderate distributions. The tax avoidance issue, therefore, seems to be considered as something that other people do that is not quite right but somewhat understandable. The one issue that demonstrates a strong consensus is the issue of cybercrime. Public opinion concerning these items leaned significantly in the direction of increased governmental intervention to enhance protection, that money laundering is a national problem with international ramifications, and that everyone is vulnerable to online data breaches and attacks.

In light of these findings, the issue of policing cannabis consumption and prostitution emerge as contested policing practices. Public opinion is also accepting of euthanasia.

However, the issue of policing abortion is deemed warranted. Tax seems to be perceived as a necessary evil whilst the issue of cybercrime is deemed as requiring more aggressive policing. It would be worth studying if public opinion appreciates that this might involve a curtailment of certain freedoms afforded by the current online environment.



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

The issue of behavioural regulation on a citizenry's part involves personal inclinations as well as institutional regulation. Societies regulate individual dispositions by making certain behaviours lawful and others criminal. This is a political task that requires revisions over time in certain behavioural domains. Whilst some behaviours, such as unjustified homicide, are unproblematically unlawful and certain others, such as eating or sleeping, are unproblematically lawful, yet other behavioural displays may lie in between these opposite ends. Nevertheless, the police are tasked with monitoring and prosecuting unlawful behaviours regardless of tendencies in public opinion. This is problematic with regards to the force's reputation, as it is at times perceived as heavy handed with regard to some behaviours that are trivial or minor, and/or lenient with behaviours that should clearly be prohibited. The extent to which public opinion corresponds with the state of the criminal code, therefore, bears an influence on how effective they police are judged to be in their work. The study of public opinion, therefore, reveals consistencies and inconsistencies between the two that may help or hinder the objective to sustain trust in the police force towards the effective combatting of crime. In the present study, we have reported an amelioration of inclinations pertaining to foreigners in Malta over the past decade, although more work is needed in this domain to avoid or minimise the relative undervaluing of certain socio-ethnic groups. We have also reported an amelioration of wellbeing during the same time period that, however, remains associated with criminal neighbourhoods. Finally, we have provided evidence that public opinion is in certain domains consonant with the law but inconsistent in other key domains. We encourage political debate surrounding these inconsistencies in an effort to resolve discrepant public opinion. We conclude by suggesting periodical monitoring of public opinion around contested societal issues informed by empirical evidence.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Questionnaire**

Firstly, may you let me know if you or members of your household have ever served with the police force (including 'Police Community Support Officers' [PCSOs])?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ EXCLUDE 'YES' RESPONDENTS

### **Demographics**

**Age (years)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Gender: Man; Woman; Other**

**City/Village where you reside**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Postcode/Name of street**

**Nationality**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your highest level of education**

Primary      Secondary      Post-Secondary      Tertiary

**Relationship status**

Married      Not Married

Seperated/Divorced/Annulled Marriage      Widow

**Occupation**

- ☐ Unskilled: like working in fields, catering, house cleaning
- ☐ Skilled: like technician, woodworker, hairdresser, tailor
- ☐ Office work ('White collar'): like clerk, salesperson, secretary, small business
- ☐ Professional: like doctor, lawyer, teacher, business executive
- ☐ Currently not working: ☐ Unemployed ☐ Retired ☐ Housewife/husband
- ☐ Student

If you are currently without work, what is your work usually?

\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Don't know

Do you identify with a religious organisation? (e.g., Roman Catholic)?

Yes                      No

IF YES To what extent do you identify with your religion on a scale from 1 (the least identification) to 10 (the higher identification)?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

Do you suffer from any chronic illness (e.g., diabetes, chronic heart disease, etc.)?

Yes\_\_\_\_                      No \_\_\_\_

In general, how healthy are you? You can say your health is:

1. Very bad                      2. Bad                      3. Not bad                      4. Good                      5. Very good

**Socio-economic status**

Does your family own a telephone/mobile? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Does your family own a washing machine and electric oven? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Does your family own a car, van, or truck? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Does your family own a computer? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Does your family own a 'Smart TV'? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Does your family own an air-conditioner? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Do you sometimes avoid using your air-conditioner to save money from your electricity bill?  
Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Wellbeing: Personal and Social****Life Satisfaction**

I am going to read some statements regarding how you think about yourself and your life.

Tell me to what extent you agree with each one from a scale from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 5 (Totally Agree):

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Unsure / Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
1. In many ways, my life approximates my ideal.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. My life conditions are excellent.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. I am satisfied with my life.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. So far, I have all the important things I want in life.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- |                                   |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 5. If I were to relive my life, I | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| would change almost nothing.      |     |     |     |     |     |

### Psychological Problems

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'All the Time', how often do you experience the following?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the Time
1. I feel tired.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. I feel sick in the stomach.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. I feel dizzy and weak.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. I feel short of breath even when I am not exercising.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. I feel weak all over.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. I feel tense or very excited.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. I feel nervous and agitated.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. I feel restless.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. I feel annoyed and irritable.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. I feel worried that something is going to happen.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]



11. I feel unhappy and sad.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12. I feel confused.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
13. I am worried most of the time.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
14. I feel alone even when I am surrounded by others.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
15. I lose interest and pleasure in the things I used to enjoy.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

### Self Evaluation

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Totally Disagree' and 5 is 'Totally Agree', to what extent do you agree about these statements regarding yourself and your life?

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Unsure / Neutral	Agree	Totally agree
1. All in all, I am satisfied with myself.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. Sometimes I feel I am good at nothing.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. I feel I have a number of good qualities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. I am capable of doing things as much as others.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- |     |  |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 5.  | I feel I have what to be proud of.                                     | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| 6.  | Sometimes I feel useless.  | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| 7.  | I feel I am a person of value, at least on an equal level with others. | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| 8.  | I do not have enough respect for myself.                               | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| 9.  | Sometimes I think of myself as a failure.                              | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| 10. | I have a positive attitude toward myself.                              | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |

### Socio-Cultural Competence

Please, indicate how often you experience difficulty in living in Malta with regards to each of these aspects, on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means you have ‘no difficulty’ and 5 means you have ‘extreme difficulty’:

[Use the scale from 1 to 5 if asked

1 = no difficulty      2 = little difficulty      3 = moderate difficulty

4 = great difficulty      5 = extreme difficulty]

1. Making friends	1	2	3	4	5
2. Finding food you like.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Following rules and customs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Dealing with people in authority.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Using public transport.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Dealing with beauracracy.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Making yourself understood.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Going shopping.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Understanding jokes and humour.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Finding accomodation.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Going to social gatherings.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Communicating with others belonging to a different ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Understanding differences in culture and ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5
14. Praying	1	2	3	4	5
15. Establishing a relationship with individuals from the opposite sex	1	2	3	4	5
16. Finding your way around.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Talking about yourself with others.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Dealing with the climate.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Family relations.	1	2	3	4	5
20. The pace of life.	1	2	3	4	5

**Social Capital: Contacts**

The following are questions about friends and people you know.

a. How many close friends do you have?









	None	Only One	A Few	Quite a lot	A lot
Close friends who are Maltese [read the scale]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Close friends who are foreign [read the scale]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

b. How often do you meet with:





	Never	Rarely	Sometime s	Often	Every day
Close friends who are Maltese [read the scale]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Close friends who are foreign [read the scale]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

**Social Disorganisation – Winstanley et al., 2008**

On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means you ‘Totally disagree’ and 5 means you ‘Totally agree’, to what extent do you agree with the following statements.

	Totally disagree	Totally agree
There is a lot of criminality in my neighbourhood.		
A lot of selling of drugs happens in my neighbourhood.		
People in my neighbourhood rarely help each other out.		
In my neighbourhood, there is a lot of fighting.		
In my neighbourhood, there are a lot of empty or abandoned buildings.		
People in my neighbourhood rarely visit each other's houses.		
There is a lot of graffiti in my neighbourhood.		
People often move in and out of my neighbourhood.		

**Relative Personal Deprivation – Callan et al., 2008**

	Totally disagree	Totally agree
When I think about what I have compared with others, I don't feel deprived.		
I feel privileged when compared to others like me.		
Compared with others, I feel satisfied when I see how wealthy or poor other people are.		
When I compare what I have with others, I realise that I am quite well off.		

**Perceptions of Crime and Security****Perceptions of Security**

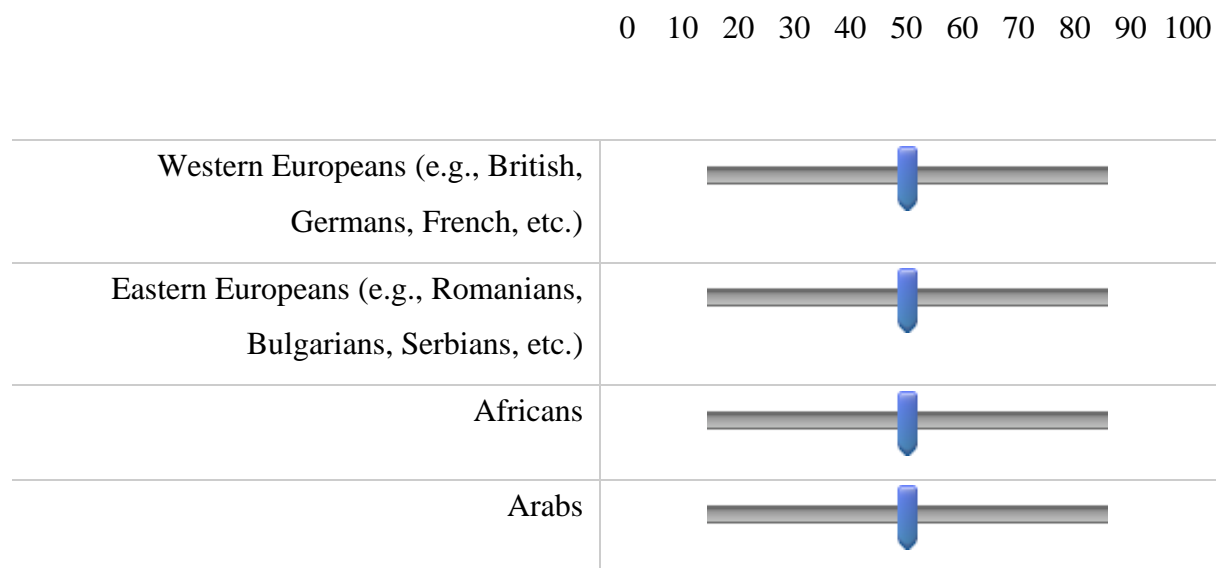
On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being 'Totally disagree' and 5 'Totally agree', how much do you agree that:

	Totally disagree			Totally agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
There is/isn't room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country.					
We need to take steps to protect our cultural traditions from outside influences.					
Learning other languages makes us forget our own cultural traditions.					
I am concerned about the loss of my cultural identity.					
I do not feel culturally secure as Maltese.					
Unemployment in Malta worries me.					

This country does not have enough wealth and prosperity for everyone to feel secure.	1	2	3	4	5
The cost of living here in Malta makes it difficult to have enough money for essential needs.	1	2	3	4	5
People aren't concerned enough about economic matters.	1	2	3	4	5
The possibility of living a secure and peaceful life today is worse than ever before.	1	2	3	4	5
Our society is going from bad to worse.	1	2	3	4	5
Reports about immoral people and people without scruples in our society are realistic	1	2	3	4	5
The probability that people suffer theft, abuse, or even murder is getting higher and higher.	1	2	3	4	5

### Socio-Ethnic Thermometers

How favourable is your attitude towards the following ethnic groups on a scale from 0 (cold) to 100 (hot/favourable)?





**Tolerance/Prejudice**

On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means you Totally Disagree and 5 means you Totally Agree, to what extent do you agree that:

- |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  | It is a bad idea for people of different race/ethnicity to marry each other.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.  | Immigrants/ethnicities that live here should not insist where they are not welcome.                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.  | If an employer wants to only hire people of a certain group, it is their business.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4.  | I get angry when I hear of immigrants/ethnicities asking for rights like Maltese citizens.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5.  | Immigrants/ethnicities should not have a say about Malta's future like people who were born and raised here. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.  | It is bad to have people from different ethnic groups and race living together in the same country.          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.  | We should not promote equality between all groups, regardless of racial or ethnic origin.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8.  | Some people are simply inferior to others.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9.  | To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step over others.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | If people were treated equally, we would have more problems in this country.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. We shouldn't treat other nationalities in an equal way to Maltese. 1 2 3 4 5

### **Fear of Crime**

During the last 12 months, have you personally been a victim of crime? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

IF YES What was the crime? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you reported this experience to the police? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Do you think that the police treated you justly? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Did the police treat you respectfully? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

In general, were you (the victim) satisfied with how the police handled your matter?

YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Did the police find or catch whoever did it? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

In general, were you (the victim) satisfied with the action the police took?

YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

Were you asked to give evidence in court regarding this case? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

If you think about this incident that we are discussing, have you or other people that live in this house had some kind of contact with the services offered to victims?

YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

In general, were you (the victim) satisfied with the contact you had with the services offered to victims? YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_

[FOR THE QUESTION 'During the coming 12 months...'] If it HAPPENS DURING THE COMING 12 MONTHS, how likely are you to report to the police, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is (Highly unlikely) and 5 is (Highly likely)?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Apart from this incident, have you personally been a victim of another criminal act during the last 12 months?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

IF YES What was the crime? \_\_\_\_\_

REPEAT THE MEASURES ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE LIKE THE ABOVE QUESTION UNTIL THE REPLY IS NEGATIVE.

During the last 12 months, have you personally witnessed a criminal act happening? Yes \_\_\_  
No \_\_\_

IF YES What was the crime? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you give a statement to the police? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Were you asked to give evidence in court regarding this crime? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Have you witnessed any other criminal activity during the last 12 months? YES\_\_\_ No \_\_\_

IF YES What was the crime? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you give a statement to the police? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Were you asked to give evidence in court regarding this crime? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

REPEAT UNTIL THE REPLY IS NEGATIVE

If you think about the future, how likely do you think you are to experience a criminal act in the next 12 months (on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is ‘highly unlikely’ and 10 is ‘highly likely’)?

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

IF >=5 What type of crime? \_\_\_\_\_

## Cops & Pleysier (2011) – Fear of Crime

On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is 'totally disagree' and 5 is 'totally agree'), to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“Nowadays, it is too dangerous to let children on the streets unsupervised”

1
2
3
4
5

“Out of fear that something will happen to me, I don’t risk going out alone at night”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“At night, you need to be very careful when walking the streets”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“During the last 10 years, the streets have become less safe”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“The police are not capable of protecting us from criminals anymore”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“Out of fear of being attacked, I don’t risk going into certain areas”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“An alarm against burglars isn’t a luxury nowadays”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“I don’t risk staying at home alone during the evenings or night-time”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

### **From the British Crime Survey: Perceptions of Crime**

Now, I would like to ask you questions about levels of crime.

Not all areas in the country experience the same level of crime. What happens in your locality may or may not reflect the picture of the whole country. There are no right or wrong answers for the following questions; simply your opinions. Please, reply on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is ‘Decreased a lot’ and 5 is ‘Increased a lot’

What do you think has happened with crime in the COUNTRY IN GENERAL during the last few years?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

And what do you think has happened with crime in your LOCAL AREA during the last few years?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

For the following, can you tell me how problematic they are in your area? When I say ‘your area’ I mean up to a 15 minute walk away from where you live. Please reply on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is ‘Not a problem at all’ and 5 is ‘A very big problem’.

How much of a problem are noisy neighbours and noisy parties?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem are teenagers wandering the streets?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem is trash and littering?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem is vandalism, graffiti or intentional damage to property or cars?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem are drugs users and traffickers?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem are drunk or loud people in public places?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem are abandoned, burnt, or broken cars?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem is speeding?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem is burglary?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem are unwanted sexual advances?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

How much of a problem is fighting on the streets?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

### **Adams & Serpe (2000) – Concerns about Crime**

On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is ‘Totally disagree’ and 5 is ‘Totally agree’), to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

“When I am far away from my house, I worry about my property’s security.”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“I worry a lot about my personal safety from crime and criminals.”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“I worry a lot about the safety of my loved ones from crime and criminals.”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“Even in my own house, I don’t feel safe from people who wish to take things I own.”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

“There is reason to fear being a victim of crime in my community.”

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Most of us WORRY, at one point or another, about being a victim of crime.

Can you tell me how much you worry about the following, from a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is ‘I am not worried at all’ and 5 is ‘I am very worried’:

That someone breaks into your house and steals something?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

That you are assaulted and robbed?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

That your car is stolen?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

That you are raped?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

That you are physically attacked by strangers?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

That you are a victim of online crime?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Perceptions of police and policing****Trust in the Police**

I am going to read some statements. Tell me how much you agree with each one on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'Totally disagree' and 10 is 'Totally agree'):

- "We can trust the police in fulfilling their duties"

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- "Generally, I am satisfied with the service provided by the police force in my locality"

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- "I trust that the police do everything in their power to prevent or solve crime in my locality"

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- "If I ever personally experience some criminal act, I am confident that the police will do their best to help"

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- "During the last 12 months, there was an increase in police patrolling the streets"

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- "The police generally treat people politely and with respect"

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10



**Nadal & Davidoff (2015) – Scale on Perceptions of Police**

Now I am going to read to you some statements and I am going to ask you to what extent do you agree with each one on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Totally disagree' and 5 is 'Totally agree'.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

1. Police officials are friendly
2. Police officials protect me
3. Police officials treat all people justly
4. I like the police
5. The police are good people
6. The police do not discriminate
7. The police provide safety
8. The police are helpful
9. The police are trustworthy
10. The police are reliable
11. Police officials are unbiased
12. Police officials care about my community

### Community Policing

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements, on a scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree)?

[RANDOMISE]

The police should go beyond their call of duty, for example, to help vulnerable people.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The police should stick to their job description.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

To catch criminals is most important for police.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The prevention of crime should be the principal priority of police.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The police should not be allowed to use force, unless it is absolutely necessary.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The police should be given 'body cameras' for the protection of themselves and the people.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

'Body cameras' result in data protection issues and a lack of privacy.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

CCTV cameras are very good at catching criminals, because they are a source of evidence.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

CCTV cameras result in data protection issues and a lack of privacy.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

CCTV cameras can be abused by powerful people (e.g., police, politicians, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

The police should be free to stop and search anyone even for the slightest suspicion.

1 2 3 4 5

If the police carry out a search on people for no reason, this results in an abuse of power.

1 2 3 4 5

Few police are 'laid back'.

1 2 3 4 5

Many police are motivated by a sense of duty.

1 2 3 4 5

The police are very effective in their work.

1 2 3 4 5

The police hardly ever solve cases.

1 2 3 4 5

I think the work of the police is more of a vocation than a career.

1 2 3 4 5

Career progression goals are necessary in the police sector.

1 2 3 4 5

There should be a greater presence of police in the streets.

1 2 3 4 5

If there are more police in the streets, more crime will be prevented.

1 2 3 4 5

Having too many police in the streets makes me feel like I am constantly under surveillance.

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better to have more police in stations rather than in the streets.

1 2 3 4 5

If the police build closer ties with the community, people would feel safer.

1 2 3 4 5

If the police builds closer ties with the community, the result will be corruption.

1 2 3 4 5

There is need for more police in stations.

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better if police officials spend more time in the streets, ready for action, rather than in stations.

1 2 3 4 5

The use of social media by the police results in better communication with the people.

1 2 3 4 5

If the police use social media, people will end up wasting their time with useless requests.

1 2 3 4 5

It would be better if people report criminal acts personally to the police, instead of sending messages to the police on social media.

1 2 3 4 5

## Social Debates

I am going to read to you a list of opinions regarding current topics of public debate in Malta. For each one, tell me to what extent you agree or disagree on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least that you agree and 5 is the most that you agree.

[RANDOMISE WITHIN AND BETWEEN SECTION]

# CANNABIS

The use of cannabis is very common, so the use of cannabis should be legalised to avoid criminalisation.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The majority of people who use cannabis don't go on to become addicted to more powerful drugs.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

The people who use cannabis regularly do so to improve their quality of life

1
2
3
4
5

Instead of fighting against the use of cannabis, the state should focus more on helping those in need.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is the oldest profession in the world, so it should be legalised in order to avoid abuse.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

People, including women, should have a right to sell sexual services, if they wish.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

People who don't have a normal sexual relationship, for whatever the reason, should have a means to buy sexual services without becoming criminalised for this.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

The state should not have a right to get involved in the citizen's private lives, including cases of consent regarding the buying and selling of sexual services.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

## **ABORTION**

Women should have full and absolute rights over their own body, including the right to abort an unwanted pregnancy.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

Maltese women who wish to abort an unwanted pregnancy, should have a right to do so locally, even if others disagree with their choice.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

Women who don't have the means to carry out an abortion in another European country, should not be criminalised if they do so in Malta.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

The criminalisation of abortion in Malta leaves a negative impression of women who do it even if it is normal to do so in every other European country.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

## **TAX EVASION**

The majority of people avoid paying tax (like VAT) sometimes.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

To pay tax (like VAT) when you can avoid paying it is foolish because public money is squandered anyway.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

If one were to pay tax every time, living in Malta would be unaffordable

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

Sometimes one has to pay some taxes, like VAT, but I would rather avoid it if I can.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

### **CYBERCRIME**

Cybercrime has become a serious problem and the government has to increase scrutiny of the internet to get hold of this crime.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

Money laundering using the internet has become a problem of national proportions with international consequences

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

Hacking of private accounts and private online data has become a headache for everyone nowadays.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

### **EUTHANASIA**

People have different beliefs nowadays so those who are suffering and wish to end their lives should be allowed to do so.

1                                      2                                      3                                      4                                      5

**We've arrived at the end. Thank you for your time!**

